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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the proceedings of a 1997 conference on current state monitoring practices and the impact of changes from implementation of the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The conference was planned by the Federal/Regional Resource Center/OSEP/NASDEE workgroup on monitoring. The document has two major sections. The first section provides a brief background on monitoring requirements and a synopsis of information presented in conference sessions. In the second section, data from a survey of the demographics and monitoring practices used by states in overseeing the implementation of special education in local districts is summarized. Comparison with results of a 1994 survey found the following: very little change by states in their monitoring cycles; an increase in the number of states using focused monitoring, self-monitoring, and coordination with other state agencies; and reports by 35 states that they are in the process of revising their monitoring system. Six appendices include a Department of Education memorandum; materials from Kansas, California, and New York; the monitors' organization survey report; and the meeting agenda. (DB)

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REPORT OF THE 1997 NATIONAL MONITORING CONFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the proceedings of the 1997 National Monitoring Conference held September 2-4, 1997 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Conference was planned and conducted by the Monitoring Workgroup composed of the Federal and Regional Resource Centers (RRFC) staff. The Workgroup conducts periodic teleconference calls as a component of technical assistance and sharing among states on monitoring issues.

The report includes three major sections: 1) an overview of the presentations about specific state procedures made by State Department of Education personnel; 2) data from the *1997 Profiles of State Monitoring Systems*, a report prepared by the RRCs from survey data of the demographics and monitoring practices used by states in overseeing the implementation of special education in local districts; and, 3) a summary of presentations by the monitoring staff of the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education on the implementation visits being made to every state to review plans for the changes needed to comply with the 1997 amendments to the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. In addition, there are six appendices that include materials related to the presentations and a copy of the conference agenda.

REPORT OF THE 1997 NATIONAL MONITORING CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

This document is a report of the 1997 National Monitoring Conference that was planned by the Federal/Regional Resource Center/OSEP/NASDSE workgroup on monitoring to focus on current state monitoring practices and the impact of changes from implementation of the 1997 amendments to the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Project FORUM at NASDSE participates in the workgroup and was also involved in the two prior national monitoring conferences—1992 and 1994—for which reports were produced summarizing the proceedings of those meetings as part of the FORUM workscope.[1]

There are two major sections to this document. First, there is a brief background on monitoring requirements, and a synopsis of the information shared in conference sessions. Then, the results of a survey of current monitoring practices that was completed for the conference are analyzed and discussed. Additional information from the survey report, *Profiles of State Monitoring Systems 1997*, is included in the appendix.

BACKGROUND

The IDEA, the major federal legislation in special education, provides funding for states to support the education of students with disabilities, has since its original passage in 1975 held state departments of education (SEAs) responsible for monitoring how local education agencies (LEAs) provide programs and services for those students. The following portion of the IDEA as amended in 1997 is the current wording of the state supervisory role:

> (11) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERAL SUPERVISION-
>
> (A) IN GENERAL- The State educational agency is responsible for ensuring that --
>
> (i) the requirements of this part are met; and
>
> (ii) all educational programs for children with disabilities in the State, including all such programs administered by any other State or local agency --
>
> (I) are under the general supervision of individuals in the State who are responsible for educational programs for children with disabilities; and

[1]The reports, *Analysis of State Compliance Monitoring Practices* issued in December 1992, and *State Compliance Monitoring Practices: An Update* issued in May 1995, are available from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

(II) meet the educational standards of the State educational agency. [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Sec.1412(a)]

Since 1975, both the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSEP) and SEAs have developed monitoring systems to assess compliance with applicable statutes and regulations pertaining to programs and services for students with disabilities. Originally termed the Program Administrative Review, the series of activities used by OSEP to determine the extent to which a State is in compliance with IDEA and related requirements is comprised of a wide variety of activities that include examination of documents and onsite verification of implementation. Federal monitoring procedures have evolved over the years. The most recent revisions are detailed in the OSEP memorandum, *Monitoring Procedures of the Office of Special Education Programs* (OSEP 95-13) issued on March 2, 1995 that is included as Appendix A. As described in the *Eighteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 1996), OSEP "recognizes the critical importance of its compliance monitoring responsibility and activities," but also "places the highest priority on compliance with those IDEA requirements that have the strongest relationship with improved services and results for students with disabilities" (p. 109).

THE 1997 MONITORING CONFERENCE

Overview

The 1997 National Monitoring Conference is the fourth one of its kind. The major focus for each of these conferences has been state monitoring of LEAs, and the primary goal is the sharing of information among state monitoring personnel. The agenda for the 1997 conference was designed around the most critical issues as identified by state monitoring personnel. Presenters represented the monitoring staff from 10 states—Kansas, Texas, California, Kentucky, Virginia, New York, West Virginia, Utah, Rhode Island, and Florida—who were chosen on the basis of proposals submitted to the planning group. The format included two large-group and seven small-group sessions and covered the following topics:

- Integrated monitoring of LEAs
- Self assessment and monitoring
- Use of standards in monitoring for results
- SEA accountability for results
- Contracted monitoring
- Data management
- Tying monitoring to practice

At each conference, information relative to federal monitoring of states has also been included, and members of the federal monitoring staff have updated participants on issues and

procedures at that level. At the 1997 meeting, federal monitors discussed implementation of the IDEA amendments and implications for monitoring.

Conference Sessions - Day One:

Large Group Sessions:

Integrated Monitoring of LEAs

1) Presenters: Kansas (KS) SEA - Nancy Gray and Cherie Nicholson.

The Five Year Plan for Continuous Improvement was presented by Kansas SEA staff as a strategy to move from monitoring as an event, to monitoring as a *process* that takes place over five years. It is designed to be more student-centered and participatory for school staff.

Current KS procedures include document reviews, one visit within a five-year cycle, and corrective action plans. As summarized in the handouts (see Appendix B), the new procedures involve self-assessment at the local level using building-level teams. The components of the Plan include an LEA Application, community/parent involvement, staff development, data collection, a resource package, self assessment, review of administrative and student files, focus areas, local mini-visits and a review team. The Five Year Plan is designed to merge the new and the old to result in a continuous review process that includes all staff and students in the building with instructional decisions based on obtained data.

2) Presenter: Texas (TX) SEA - Forrest Novy

The large number of districts (over 1,100) and the tremendous diversity among student populations complicates monitoring in TX. The state's accountability system includes three types of on-site accountability evaluations designed to provide feedback for improvement. The on-site evaluations are conducted by trained peer evaluators who are guided by professional staff of the Department of Accountability and School Accreditation of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). How to tie compliance to quality was an issue in the development of this integrated system. State law requires each district to go through an improvement process that includes for each special populations program an annual needs assessment, determining performance objectives for students, and outlining initiatives for implementing improvements. In the past, special population groups, including special education were evaluated separately from the Accreditation accountability system . However, today there is a single accountability umbrella. Assumptions of the system include setting reasonable standards that include all students with appropriate consequences, allowing for maximum local program flexibility, and holding districts accountable for student performance.

A *Reference Guide for Special Education* details the compliance requirements reviewed during an integrated visit. The information found in this document is used by the Agency to guide its on-site review of a district's implementation of state and federal mandates for students receiving special education services. The guide may be used by a district to assist its review and evaluation of their special education program.

To ensure that the sample of folders selected during the on-site review is representative of the district's population of students receiving special education services, the Agency, with assistance from the district, will identify a purposeful sample of students served in the district's program. Data used include the most recent available to the Agency and the district. Students comprising the purposeful sample represent a set of 16 critical program attributes or situations, including but not limited to disability conditions previously identified, ethnic group representation, instructional levels (e.g., preschool, elementary, middle, high), and students receiving educational services in an off-home campus placement such as a self-contained separate campus instructional arrangement, a community class placement, and a multi-district class placement.

3) Presenters: California (CA)SEA - Ted Hawthorne and Catherine Conrado.

Demographics are a significant factor in CA monitoring also—the state has more the ten percent of the nation's students in 999 school districts that have over 8,000 schools. Special education is organized and delivered through 116 SELPAs (Special Education Local Plan Areas). The student population includes 40 percent Caucasian and 60 percent other, with 25 percent of the population of limited English proficiency.

CA has had an integrated monitoring model, known as the Coordinated Compliance Review (CCR) Process, in place for over 5 years. As summarized in the handout (see Appendix C), the CCR involves an onsite visit once every four years. There is an annual training program for all staff and the "field colleagues" who participate in the CCRs. Three types of reviews are conducted: full team reviews for all ten categorical programs; modifications of the full review for special education at the SELPA and district levels; and, document reviews at SEA offices with follow-up processes. The full team CCR process starts with each selected LEA completing a self-review using the State Guide. LEAs submit data that is reviewed and used by SEA staff in the planning of site visits. There are 77 compliance items reviewed by the team, and a single report is issued.

The perceived *advantages* of the coordinated process were presented as:

- Efficient scheduling of all reviews by the single CCR unit, as well as the sharing of authority, fiscal/personnel resources, and statewide LEA training by all programs.
- Uniform compliance tracking system

- Gender/ethnically balanced teams whose members include SEA staff with Field Colleagues and who have an opportunity to learn other programs
- Effective team support/collaboration that also serves as a problem-solving mechanism for the LEA
- Special education is viewed as part of the total educational environment and elevated in importance and focus to superintendents and boards.

The perceived *disadvantages* include:

- Programs required to participate
- Reduced flexibility in time, dates, choice of districts
- Potential dissension between team members
- May compromise on issues for the sake of unity
- Requires longer hours and more intensity for special education reviewers
- Limited site visits may limit systemic change.

For the 1997-98 school year, every CA school site will be required to conduct a self-review and submit the results to the SEA. In addition, every school site will submit achievement data for all students including students with disabilities.

Group Discussion with Presenters:

With the presenters as panel members, Conference participants commented and asked questions about the programs in the three states. Topics of this discussion included involvement of parents and school board members in compliance reviews, and the use of peers on teams. It was noted that the TX procedures require interviews of school board members on topics that include their role in the planning and decision making process, although there are no required questions related to special education. In reference to parent participation, KS has found parent meetings unsuccessful and now mails surveys to all parents of students with disabilities. They have a 30 to 50 percent return that yields more complete and meaningful information. CA uses both surveys and meetings. TX procedures include inviting all parents to attend a roundtable discussion and the SEA has reached similar conclusions about the inadequacy of this strategy to get parent input. Follow up calls are made to parents who do not attend the meetings to try to get more complete information related to system quality.

TX also described its summer Academy for training peer members of teams who are recruited by invitations sent to all superintendents. The LEA must commit to supporting the expenses of their staff members to attend the Academy and to participate fully in at least two site visits. The arrangements are formalized in a contract. Over 1,000 were trained in the summer of 1997.

Other discussion included the mention of New Mexico's accreditation process that involves teams of 27 or more members. Connecticut SEA staff noted that they had used an integrated approach but discontinued it five years ago. Now, special education and other compensatory education programs may visit at the same time but the process is not integrated. The New York monitoring staff described their unsuccessful use of generic teams five years ago. They now have established an entirely new system and are trying to re-integrate the process in a different way.

Self Assessment and Monitoring

1) Presenters: Kentucky (KY) SEA-Pete Hoechner, Linda Atwood, Chris Thatcher

The KY regulations for special education were originally written in the early 1970s. Changes were made as federal laws were passed, but the original eleven chapters still serve as a framework for monitoring. The Validation Review Standards contain details on what it takes to meet the requirements and they are written within the framework of the state regulations. There is a statement for each standard and an interpretation of what meets the requirements of that standard. The Self-Study contains 279 items based on the Interpretations.

The SEA is careful to request only data that is necessary and not "what would be nice to collect." Data items are all controlled within a spreadsheet organized by each section of the regulations. The LEA does not have to send supporting documents to the SEA, but rather submits only the Self-Study Form within 30 days of the scheduled site visit with only a "Y" or "N" for each item. The LEA decides on the criteria for compliance or non-compliance on each item. Every "Y" is validated by the SEA, but the team does not validate the "N" responses which are accepted as non-compliance items. If the SEA decides that an item should be an "N" but the LEA responded "Y," the SEA provides documentation for that finding. The SEA criteria is a minimum of two non-compliance incidents for a finding. The report also includes "possible areas of non-compliance."

2) Presenters: Virginia (VA) SEA - Sandra Ruffin, James Brashears

Three years ago, VA changed from a "one size fits all" to an individualized monitoring approach. The state now uses a three-phase process. First, school divisions must do a self-assessment and a program improvement plan for any deficiencies they find. This activity must be done by a team that includes the principal, general and special education teachers, parents, and others. There are 145 identified federal and state requirements that comprise the self-assessment document, with two questions for each: Are you meeting the requirement? and Are there any concerns? Comments are expected to be made if there are any non-compliance issues or concerns expressed. A Program Improvement Plan must be developed for any non-compliance issues with specific corrective actions, completion dates, and persons responsible. The LEA must also report on the procedure used by the self-

assessment committee including who was involved, how it was done, and the strengths and exemplary practices recognized by the committee. The second phase occurs in the following year. Documentation is gathered by the LEA and is used by the SEA for drawing a district profile and planning the form of the site visit. Phase three occurs after the visit and involves follow-up and the implementation of a corrective action plan.

The VA staff sees the benefits of self assessment as follows:

- Identification of program strengths and exemplary actions
- Develops a better understanding of state and federal requirements
- Focuses and concentrates on areas needing improvement
- Fosters sharing of responsibility between LEA and SEA
- Lessens need for large teams, shortens visits, and may eliminate some visits.

LEAs have expressed positive reactions similar to the SEA estimation of benefits. Comments have stressed that the new process has initiated a new era of cooperation among teachers, parents and LEA staff, and has supported the LEA ownership of the process, and has changed the focus of monitoring to program improvement.

Small Group Sessions: After the presentations, the participants were divided into small groups to discuss the topic of self-assessment. Each small group generated questions and comments that were then discussed with the full group.

Large Group Session on Self Assessment: Each small group generated questions that were then discussed in a large group session with responses by the presenters. The following is a summary of the questions and comments. A list of the questions that were submitted but could not be discussed because of limited time is also included.

- How much staff time did it take to implement the VA and KY self-assessment process?
  VA: spent a full year revising the monitoring system. In prior years used as many as 5-8 team members - now use only 1 or 2 and those are state staffers.
  KY: onsite visits limited to 2 days - teams are 5 to 12 - do training in summer - now have some technology applications in process: a CD disk will have a step-by-step process with examples. Process is still evolving - even better than we first envisioned. This is now 3rd year.

- Are results of self-assessment considered public documents?
  VA and KY - yes.
  KY: with 279 indicators, it is important to keep school council and others involved - better to have locals identify and not have SEA contradict.

- How will OSEP view self the self-assessment approach? LEAS performing self-assessment monitoring - will this be enough to satisfy OSEP requirements?

KY: validates LEA input so it is not only self-assessment.
VA: thinks it meets OSEP requirements with its self-assessment process - this was done as a part of VA's corrective action plan. Involving other stakeholders especially advocacy groups is an important part of the process.

- Do you ever compile the results of self-assessments across the state?
  VA: This is done every year even before this latest revision - tends to group around specific issues including timelines, IEPs.
  KY: database contains findings from all LEAs, but do not separate those identified by separation into LEA and SEA; can do queries of the database and identify concentrated areas of needs.

- Does self-evaluation result feed into CSPD system for inservice?
  KY: 90% of corrective action activities include some kind of professional development activities.
  VA: have five technical assistance staff members (TAs) who represent different areas of the state; all share results of self-assessments with other Tas; LEAs can also request assistance as result of their self-assessments.

- To what extent are parents involved in reviewing the self-assessment findings?
  VA: State Advisory Committee (SAC) has been supportive - annual report of deficiencies found is shared with SAC. LEAs are urged to involve parents and other community members in their processes.
  KY: SAC is also very active - a lot depends on the strength of the local special education director as to degree of public involvement.

- How does an SEA staff identify the areas they will focus on in the visit?
  VA: A profile is compiled that contains complaints, due process hearings, annual plan, and other data - look at areas to choose specific focus issues for each visit.

- When an LEA indicates it is out of compliance and the state accepts this, how does the state know the degree of non-compliance?
  KY: We don't - we look for the end result of bringing area back into compliance - the steps taken are up to LEA.
  VA: same thing - not a matter of degree - just join in the effort to fix it. Some other states ask for specifics on the degree of the problem.

- How do you handle changes that occur between self-assessment and onsite such as children moving, staff changes? What about change in principals or those responsible for implementing a corrective action?

VA: although things change, the way we serve children does not. Change is continuous and the SEA changes too - TA people are integral part of process - "grandfather clause" - have to accept duties left by predecessors.
KY: we wait for documentation submission until 30 days before onsite; the person responsible is director of special education - regional SEA people are responsible for follow up if LEA administrators change.

❒ How do you handle inter-rater variability?
VA: There is a monitoring guide with details about what should be reviewed and included in a plan. Training and good documentation is the only way to deal with it.

❒ Does the state provide training and TA to LEAs about how to fill out the self-assessment process?
KY: mass dissemination of information and a full day of review of requirements.
VA: regional monitoring institutes are held in July to review each phase of the process, and extensive time is spent on the self-assessment phase; the process is still being evaluated - feedback has been requested from those who had gone through the process and this is valuable input. One suggestion was to provide the institute by means of technology, but SEA staff thinks it important to meet face-to-face.
KY: those from systems to be monitored in the following year are involved in current year monitoring.

❒ What impact if any has the adoption of self assessment had on the number of formal complaints received from parents and advocates?
VA: we have not done that correlation, we hope it will improve parent awareness of regulations and lessen parent vendettas against districts.
KY: we also have not done that correlation.

❒ Do you include verification of the implementation of the IEP in monitoring?
KY: Interviews provide this information - we look for lesson plans for IEP goals and contact logs for service providers.
VA: Monitoring includes looking at implementation of a due process order; we have reduced classroom observations - do not see them as providing valuable information as to IEP implementation.

❒ If districts do not complete their corrective actions, what is done to ensure compliance?
KY: the consultant hired by the SEA is required to choose the action and may withhold funds.
Other states commented that they also use the withholding of funds for lack of progress on corrective actions; some have consequences that involve the school or district's accreditation.

- ❒ Does any SEA audit the computer based system of LEAs that use computer generated IEPs?
  Some states have been contacted by a software company to participate on an advisory committee to assure that the computer program includes all elements. SEAs do not officially endorse components such as banks of objective.

- ❒ Has any state found a correlation between a school district's degree of compliance and students with disabilities' performance on statewide assessments, rate of graduation, dropout rates?

- ❒ Is integrated monitoring really "integrated," or are people just going to the same place together at the same time and doing different things?

- ❒ Are the results of a self-assessment considered "public documents?"

- ❒ Can LEA self-assessment without SEA onsite validation ever be considered adequate for compliance monitoring to satisfy OSEP requirements?

- ❒ To what extent are advocacy groups supporting the self-assessment process?

Conference Sessions - Day Two:

Large Group Session: Presenters: New York (NY) SEA - Rebecca Cort, Dan Johnson

This presentation was a report on the complete revision of New York State's monitoring processes. A copy of the materials that describe the NY system are included as Appendix D.

The forces at work to change the NY system were a new Commissioner and input provided by other states through past monitoring conferences and individual follow-up contacts. The old NY process had over 600 compliance items that were checked in onsite visits after which reports were written requiring changes to be made. NY state has 360,000 students with disabilities, 713 school districts, and 38 intermediate districts that vary greatly in size from over a million students in the New York City system to rural districts that have less than ten students with disabilities.

Starting with a statewide advisory group representing all sectors, the monitoring system was redesigned into a *Quality Assurance System*. The advisory group continues to provide feedback as the program is being implemented. The materials are in the process of being adapted for intermediate units, preschool programs, and private schools.

Data and outcomes now provide the starting point for reviews. The state uses a seven-year cycle with three levels of review. The level is chosen for a district based on the degree of

state involvement deemed necessary. A *Quality Assurance Verification Review* is chosen for a district that meets or exceeds most or all of the state's strategic plan goals that support IDEA. In addition to test scores, the key performance indicators (KPI) used for this decision include numbers of diplomas awarded, dropout incidence, classification rate, integration in general education classrooms, and placement in separate settings. There is verification of the KPI data, a desk audit of the LEA application, and a discussion of best practices.

The second level, the *Quality Assurance* Collaborative Review, is selected for districts that exhibit average performance in meeting goals. A Quality Assurance Collaborative Review is conducted by a team that includes the special education director, building principal, parent, general and special education teachers, related services provider or compensatory education teacher, and an SEA Regional Associate. The review process includes a full day training, submission of desk audit materials, the use of IDEA discretionary funding to assist district team activities, a data report, and surveys of parents, staff and administrators.

A *facilitated review* district is one which fails to meet most goals. In this type of district, review process covers two years. In the first year there is a verification of the KPI data and an intensive self-review by a district team under the direction of the Superintendent that must result in a plan to improve student results. The Regional Associate is actively involved in the development of this plan and IDEA funds are used to support the process. In the second year, a Quality Assurance Collaborative Team Review is conducted.

NY does not have a unit record system, but is working toward establishing one to allow better analysis of cohorts of students. A process for verifying the implementation of corrective actions is also being developed, and follow-up visits may be a part of it. A new alternate assessment system for students with severe disabilities is under development at this time, but all others, including most students with disabilities, must participate in the same state assessment that is a requirement for earning a diploma.

Many of the NY documents are available online (<www.nysed.gov>)

Small Group Sessions: SEA representatives and monitoring contractors provided facilitation for the small group sessions as noted followed by brief reports from each one to the whole group.

1) Use of Standards in Monitoring for Results - Forrest Novy, Texas SEA

This topic was defined as the focus on outcomes in the monitoring process. It involves matching student needs and performance results to accountability evaluation systems. Emphasis must be on what students with disabilities should be learning. Issues discussed included the identification of qualitative and quantitative data sources to measure student performance and program effectiveness. It was noted that "compliance" results are the primary focus of program reviews today. However a number of states are aggressively

looking at methods to identify, collect, analyze, and report quality data about programs and services students' receive. The corrective action plan system as an integral part of any accountability monitoring system was seen as in need of extensive review to make it support the major goal of improving results for students.

2) *SEA Accountability for Results* - Kay Johnston, West Virginia SEA
States agreed that monitoring has concentrated only on compliance in the past, but has recently shifted to more of a technical assistance emphasis. This group generated many questions that need to be addressed relative to accountability: How should corrective action plans be followed up? How can we relate accountability for students with disabilities with general education? Should staff be assigned to follow through with an LEA on verification and complete closeout of a monitoring event? How can an IEP be part of accountability? How can states integrate monitoring with other department programs?

3) *Contracted Monitoring* - Margaret Lubke and Emily Johnson, TRL Monitoring
Contracting with individuals or organizations outside of the SEA to do LEA monitoring was described as a strategy that allows SEA staff to do more technical assistance for LEAs. Utah is one state that uses contracting. The SEA issues a request for proposal and has contracted with TRL. One member of the SEA is on each monitoring team. The SEA does not abrogate its monitoring responsibility, but rather uses contractors to gather data and assist with the preparation of the report and the development of corrective action plans. This year, Utah is essentially following the same procedure as OSEP—going into every district to look at the provisions of IDEA and develop a personalized plan for the district to come into alignment with the new law. Then, Utah will resume its cyclical monitoring.

4) *Data Management* - Pete Hoechner, Linda Atwood, Chris Thacker, KY
This session was a discussion of the data system used in Kentucky. The SEA had considered developing standards for best practices, but has decided not to pursue that. A computer program is used in monitoring. After data is entered, reports can be generated immediately and compliance problems identified. Detailed reports can also be compiled for each self-study item. A form can also be issued for the district to add the corrective action component.

5) *Tying Monitoring to Practice* - Anne DeFanti, Tom DiPaola, Janice Stavros, RI, and Cathy Bishop, FL
This session ended with a provocative question: can we actually tie monitoring to practice? Ways to make this happen had been discussed, such as using a quality assurance approach, improving relationship building, closer work between the SEA and LEA in preparation for a monitoring visit, more collaboration between the SEA and the LEAs, and ownership by the district of the process. However, there is still the element of compliance

and the shift cannot be made completely to the use of standards and performance. Rhode Island uses an identified set of student throughout the monitoring visit to get consistency and relate the process to practice. Florida has moved away from a disability-based funding system to a services-based system and tying it into the funding system.

The Federal Perspective: Presenters: Larry Wexler, Catherine Cooke, Bobbi Stettner-Eaton, U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Monitoring and State Improvement Plan Division

Larry Wexler:

OSEP's major effort at this time is to conduct site visits in every state to facilitate some type of plan for the implementation of IDEA 1997 that will also incorporate all of the outstanding corrective action plans in the state. We want to involve parents and advocacy groups and be collegial and collaborative with states. OSEP wants states to implement IDEA 1997 in a systematic way and see the gestalt of IDEA 1997 that is a child-centered law. The overall purpose of the implementation agreements is to get a timely and systematic implementation while, at the same time, continue to get corrective actions implemented. The agreement will include actions steps for operationalizing all the new requirements, addressing outstanding corrective action needs and clearing up any outstanding conditional state plan items.

The second component is an inventory: OSEP has developed an inventory that reflects all the requirements of IDEA. OSEP is not requiring an SEA to use the inventory, only encouraging them to use it or some type of inventory to identify where they are and any discrepancies that exist. The agenda is a state-specific agenda - each state is at a different place and will see their priorities differently. Some states already have a plan - OSEP will blend into that and develop the implementation agreement based on what the state has already done. The pilot was already done in MT - next week KS, MI and KY will be done. Of the nine people who will be on these initial visits, one will lead each of the remaining visits to assure consistency and OSEP internal control.

Each state team is composed of SEA administrators chosen by the state with a level of participation as the state sees fit. A parent representative is also expected, as is a teacher, a protection and advocacy representative, and an LEA director. OSEP is encouraging SEAs to provide a meeting facilitator or to use someone from the RRC to do this. OSEP feels that the RRC staff are familiar with the states and will be in a good position to provide TA to the states.

The content of the actual agreement is similar to a corrective action plan in that it identifies discrepancies and issues of non-compliance and strategies to address the problems. The process for corrective action as OSEP does it now is a joint activity and the result is mandated. The SEA provides the way in which that result will be reached. It is an action plan - specific action steps, timelines, required resources, staff involved, and some type of

verification. After the agreement is done, states are asked to get some type of public comment - OSEP is asking states to do this because it is a "best practice." Each state can do this in its own way.

OSEP sees many benefits in this process: it will require all SEAs within six months to develop an agreement for implementing IDEA 1997; it will provide an opportunity for parents and advocates to participate in the plan; and, it will encourage states to take a comprehensive approach to IDEA 1997 rather than just taking a checklist approach to the new requirements. It also retains OSEP enforcement authority for ongoing corrective actions since OSEP is not wiping the slate clean. It will also facilitate the new IEP requirements that go into effect in June, 1998.

What will OSEP do after these visits are complete? OSEP will maintain a full follow up schedule after January 1998. All states' eligibility documents will be reviewed by the early spring. OSEP will do ongoing verification of the agreements that states come up with as a result of the fall visits.

In 1998-99, OSEP will be monitoring. The system may be revised and the cycle may also change. Plans will be announced by the next OSEP Leadership Conference. The new regulations: expected to be out at the beginning of October 1997. OSEP staff is working around the clock to meet that timeline.

Can the SEA follow the same process that OSEP is following? It depends:

1. Every SEA has signed an assurance that it is following the new law.
2. Every SEA must continue to exercise its general supervisory responsibility.

OSEP will entertain a proposal from any state to do what OSEP is doing - every state is different and there are no general rules for this. OSEP will accept proposals and will let the state know. MT has made such a proposal and it was received well, but no one states is a "model."

The new IEP provisions of IDEA need to be implemented by the beginning of the 1998-99 school year. Every IEP that is in effect at the beginning of that school year will have to have met the new requirements. If those plans are written during the previous spring, they will have to follow the new provisions.

Catherine Cooke:
Other things are also going on at OSEP now. One area is the ongoing effort to promulgate regulations. Since 6/27, OSEP has received many comments and held four outreach meetings. By the end of September, the proposed regulations will be published in the Federal Register for comment. Open meetings to talk about those regulations have already been set for Boston, Atlanta, San Francisco, Kansas City.

Another activity taking place through the Federal Resource Center is the development comprehensive training packets that will include overheads, scripts. They will be sent to every state and parent training center. They are designed to be used with a variety of groups - a large training session will be held with parent centers in October and with NASDSE in November.

Information on discipline: a separate document in the form of a Q&A is being prepared that will be released by the end of September.

Another source of assistance is a series of handbooks on various topics. The contents are already in the vetting process on mediation, due process, IEP, positive behavior intervention, funding, SIP, discipline and others. OSEP also has in-house topical workgroups - national assessment, SIP, TA, and regulations for discretionary programs. Other agencies and organizations are also involved. OSEP staff is attending conferences and meetings and making presentations about IDEA 1997. From time to time, articles are also being put into publications. The OSEP website is:<www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP> It is updated continuously. OSEP is also sending out monthly updates in meeting these goals.

Bobbi Stettner-Eaton:
Part H (to be Part C next year) has been integrated into the monitoring group at OSEP. Only one-third of SEAs have lead responsibility for this, but all SEAs play an integral part in other ways. New staff have been hired and OSEP now has a full cadre of six individuals plus Bobbi. Each monitoring team has two experts in Part H who are well experienced at state and local levels. OSEP is also hiring more Part B people. Until last year, OSEP did not conduct Part H monitoring. Pilot efforts resulted in the development, in conjunction with parent and advocacy groups, of a self-assessment tool to use in setting up a partnership with states and all the stakeholders in each state. Focus is on the interagency aspect and away from OSEP as the deliverer of monitoring visits. This year, Part H OSEP staff followed the Part B schedule in part and worked closely as a total OSEP staff. Now, Part H has been focusing on specific issues. Last year, using the self-assessment approach, the focus was on issues critical to systems development: child find, service delivery, service coordination, transition, and general supervision and monitoring. Most states are also doing Part H monitoring cooperatively with Part B, but some states still do Part H separately.

In the spring of 1998, Part H monitoring will resume. It will not be done the way it was in the past - states cannot do self-assessment. It will be a truncated process this year and will be from a systems implementation approach rather than component-by-component. About 3 to 6 states will be done, but they have not yet been identified. Like the Part B state inventory that has been developed, OSEP is developing Part H inventory. It is easier because changes are not so extensive. The biggest one is the requirement for policies and procedures related to services in the natural environment.

Discussion with OSEP Presenters:
Concern was expressed about the position of OSEP on IEPs: if all of them have to be done to comply fully with the new requirements by the spring, it is unreasonable, especially given the timing of the final regulations due in April. OSEP needs to consider the possibility of the date of July 1 as the point after which all IEPs must meet the new law. Strong feelings were expressed about this. The IEP change is the biggest issue for states' monitoring - the timing OSEP is talking about now is not in the spirit of the new IDEA. OSEP staff advised that nothing is set in stone on this issue and encouraged states to express their opinion directly or through NASDSE.

Other issues discussed included assessments and the training materials to be made available by OSEP. The inclusion in state assessments is one issue that is being worked out in the implementation agreements. Will training packets be put on the website? Materials will be made available to all states - there will be every type of media involved - videotapes, overheads, etc.

SEA Proposals for Technical Assistance: The final session of the conference was a discussion of state proposals for technical assistance.

Input on national organization for monitoring: Ken Olsen provided a copy of the results of a survey he conducted on the topic of a national organization for monitoring. A copy of that report is included as Appendix E. A variety of reactions were offered in this discussion. Some think it may be too much to have a conference every year—every other year might be enough; others feel that only one or two can afford to come to a conference like this and that more staff in some states need this type of information. The Human Development Institute at University of KY is interested in pursuing this and Debra will share this discussion with them. Another comment: if the states want this activity to continue under the RRCs, then that should be expressed as something that should be a continuing RRC activity. States have to support that and OSEP has the responsibility to decide what the RRCs and FRC role should be. This conference is really an OSEP leadership activity - the RRC proposals to be issued soon should require that RRCs do national conferences such as this as OSEP decides.

A national listserv: Michele Rovins, FRC: A proposal has been made that the RRFC develop a listserv for monitoring personnel to afford them the opportunity for a national dialogue. Reaction was positive and participants agreed to try it.

The RRFC staff members asked that participants submit any other suggestions for technical assistance to them.

STATE MONITORING SURVEY

For each of the preceding national monitoring conferences, RRC staff have provided participants with a document that contains the results of a survey of states on their monitoring practices. The reports include specific data for each state and a brief narrative that states provide for inclusion in the document. The title of this year's document is *Profiles of State Monitoring Systems 1997*.

For this report, a brief analysis of the contents of the *Profiles* document was compiled and some comparisons were made with data from the 1994 report. The data provided by states was divided into three parts: Demographics, Staffing and Monitoring Team Composition, and Process Components. This section contains tables with that data and a brief analysis of each one followed by a summary of the narratives provided by states.

The first table includes data on the number of entries each state must monitor—school districts (LEAs), intermediate units (IEUs), charter schools, and private schools—and the number of students with disabilities according to the state's IDEA child count on December 1, 1996.

Monitoring Profiles of States - 1997 - Table 1: Demographics

ITEM #	1a	1b	1c	1d	1	2
Item Title	LEAs	IEUs	OTHERS	Charter Sch	Private Sch	Child
	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Count
State						
AK	53	0	2	0	1	17,591
AL	130	0	11	0	30	97,705
AR	311	0	9	0	0	55,482
AZ	225	0	0	206	0	80,776
CA	1,000	58	3	116	0	583,995
CO	54	0	3	0	86	71,530
CT	169	0	6	0	0	81,497
DE	19	0	2	1	5	15,735
FL	67	0	7	0	0	322,810
GA	182	0	44	0	0	141,149
HI	7	0	1	0	0	16,932
IA	378	15	9	0	0	68,026
ID	112	0	18	0	10	25,196
IL	0	97	3	0	0	267,391
IN	65	0	6	0	0	138,288
KS	305	0	8	0	9	55,355

Item Title	LEAs	IEUs	OTHERS	Charter Sch	Private Sch	Child
	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Monitored	Count
KY	176	0	27	0	0	85,052
LA	66	0	3	0	0	92,772
MD	24	0	5	0	88	104,630
MA	350	35	0	22	150	159,023
ME	160	0	0	0	25	33,055
MI	0	57	3	0	0	193,620
MN	360	0	5	20	0	101,407
MS	151	0	14	0	18	65,507
MO	525	0	6	0	0	125,636
MT	349	36	4	0	4	18,611
NC	119	0	30	35	0	153,635
ND	234	31	5	0	5	12,710
NE	649	0	0	0	0	39,886
NM	89	0	8	5	0	49,124
NV	17	0	1	0	0	29,972
NH	74	0	0	0	35	26,420
NJ	585	36	3	17	145	202,570
NY	715	38	55	0	516	412,758
OH	611	0	85	0	0	225,957
OK	548	0	2	0	0	73,858
OR	398	0	0	0	0	70,094
PA	501	0	0	0	0	215,448
RI	38	30	3	0	25	26,600
SC	6	14	6	0	0	90,778
SD	177	37	0	0	0	15,051
TN	138	0	4	0	60	125,364
TX	1,043	20	12	17	30	461,843
UT	40	0	1	0	6	53,876
VT	61	0	2	0	0	12,381
VA	134	0	38	0	81	144,669
WA	296	0	6	0	0	107,032
WI	428	0	2	0	40	110,413
WV	55	0	7	0	0	47,317
WY	48	18	1	1	6	12,875
TOTALS	12,242	522	470	440	1,375	5,739,402
MEAN	245	9	9	6	26	114,828
MEDIAN	156	0	4	0	0	81,136

Comparison of 1997 data with 1994 data for the same factors shows some variation in change rates:

- The number of LEAs monitored decreased by 622, while the number of IEUs monitored increased by 16. T
- The number of "other" entities monitored was reduced by almost half, but some of the differences resulted from SEA reorganization and consolidation.
- The number of private entities remained went down by 81.
- The child count increase for this period was 13.7 percent.
- Public charter schools constitute a new group of entities to be monitored, but they are constituted as separate entities in only a few states. Arizona is the most significant example with a total of 206 charter schools that are considered LEAs.

Monitoring Profiles of States - 1997 - Table 2: Staffing & Team Composition

ITEM #	4a	4b	5	6	7	8	
Item Title	SEA Central Office	Located Elsewhere	SEA on Teams	LEA Peers on Teams	Parents on Teams	Others on Teams	Comments
STATE							
AK	1	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
AL							In Revision
AR	6	5	YES	YES	NO	NO	
AZ	8.4	3	YES	NO	NO	NO	
CA	4	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
CO	3	0	YES	YES	YES	YES	
CT	4	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
DE	1	0	YES	NO	NO	YES	
FL	3	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
GA	5	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
HI	1	0	YES	NO	NO	YES	
IA	2.5	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
ID	1	2.25	YES	YES	NO	NO	
IL	4	4	YES	YES	NO	NO	
IN	5	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
KS	4	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
KY	5	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
LA	0	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
MD	4.5	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
MA	16	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
ME	4	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
MI	1	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	

ITEM #	4a	4b	5	6	7	8	
Item Title	SEA Central Office	Located Elsewhere	SEA on Teams	LEA Peers on Teams	Parents on Teams	Others on Teams	Comments
MN	10	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
MS	5	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
MO	13	2.83	YES	NO	NO	NO	
MT	4.92	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
NC	3	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
ND	1.32	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
NE	2	2.25	YES	NO	NO	NO	
NM	1.2	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
NV	1	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
NH	1	0	YES	YES	YES	YES	
NJ	1	20	YES	NO	NO	NO	
NY	1	42	YES	NO	YES	NO	
OH	10	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
OK	6.1	2	YES	NO	NO	NO	
OR	3.7	0.5	YES	YES	NO	YES	
PA			YES	YES	YES	YES	
RI	1.5	0.5	YES	YES	YES	YES	
SC	7	0	YES	NO	NO	NO	
SD	6	3	YES	YES	NO	YES	
TN	2	6	YES	NO	NO	NO	
TX	6	35	YES	YES	NO	YES	
UT	1	3.5	YES	NO	NO	YES	Contracts
VT	2.2	0	YES	YES	NO	NO	
VA	4	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
WA	0.5		NO	NO	NO	YES	Contracts
WI	8.2	1	YES	NO	NO	NO	
WV	4	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
WY	3	0	YES	YES	NO	YES	
Mean	3.98	2.83	Y= 48	Y = 26	Y = 5	Y = 20	
Median	2.6	0.5	N = 1	N = 23	N = 44	N = 29	

Comparison of data from survey items in Table 2 with the same items from the 1994 survey reveals a number of significant changes:

- SEA central office staffing has been reduced by a total of 73 positions. All but 14 states lost positions in SEA monitoring, some by more than half. The mean number of monitoring staff in SEAs went down from 5.51 to 3.98 in the three year period.

- For SEA monitoring staff located elsewhere, the number of positions for 1994 and 1997 are almost exactly the same: this year the total was 132 while the 1994 total was 130.

- Six states changed their practice on the use of LEA peers on monitoring teams with the direction of the change split evenly: three that use peers discontinued the practice and three others who had not used them began including peers on teams. As a whole, states are almost even split on the use of peers.

- The same number of states—five—use parents as team members, but the specific states choosing each option has changed. Since 1994, Idaho and Illinois have reported changing form yes to no on this practice, while New Hampshire and New York have changed in the opposite direction.

- The number of states that use "others" on teams, such as university staff or researchers, changed only slightly—a decrease from 24 to 20, but the actual change within states on this practice was larger. Nine states that used others on teams in 1994 now do not, while five states that did not use such individuals in 1994 now do.

Monitoring Profiles of State - Table 3: Process Components

Item	9	11	12	13	15	16	25	38	39	40
	Cycle in	Use Focus	LEA Self-	Use Coord	Includes	Includes	Non-Fiscal	Includes	Includes	Revising
	Years	Monitoring	Monitoring	Monitoring	Quality	Results	Sanctions	EC Issues	Part H(C)	Monitoring
AK	5	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
AL										
AR	3	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
AZ	8	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
CA	4	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
CO	5	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
CT	5	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
DE	3	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
FL	4	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
GA	5	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
HI	3	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
IA	3	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
ID	5	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
IL	6	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
IN	5	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO

Item	9	11	12	13	15	16	25	38	39	40
	Cycle in	Use Focus	LEA Self-	Use Coord	Includes	Includes	Non-Fiscal	Includes	Includes	Revising
	Years	Monitoring	Monitoring	Monitoring	Quality	Results	Sanctions	EC Issues	Part H(C)	Monitoring
KS	5	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
KY	5	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
LA	4	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
MD	3	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
MA	7	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
ME	5	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
MI	3	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
MN	4	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
MS	5	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
MO	5	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
MT	5	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
NC	5	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
ND	5	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
NE	5	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
NM	3	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
NV	3	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
NH	5	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
NJ	4	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
NY	7	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
OH	7	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
OK	4	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
OR	6	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
PA	6	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
RI	5	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
SC	4	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
SD	4	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
TN	5	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
TX	5	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
UT	5	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
VT	6	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
VA	6	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
WA	3	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
WI	6	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
WV	4	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
WY	5	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mean	4.7	Y = 31	Y = 29	Y = 19	Y = 24	Y = 12	Y = 19	Y = 38	Y = 10	Y = 35
Median	5	N = 18	N = 20	N = 30	N = 25	N = 37	N = 30	N = 11	N = 39	N = 14

Table 3 summarizes some elements of state monitoring systems that are considered process components. The following are some observations that were revealed by comparing this data with the 1994 survey results:

- Very little change was made by states in their monitoring cycles. Three states—Delaware, Minnesota, and Ohio—reduced the number of years in their cycles by one or two years, while Arizona, Utah and Virginia increased the number of years in their cycles by three, two, and one year respectively.

- A few more states reported using focused monitoring in 1997 than in 1994. In 1994, the split was half and half, while now 31 states use this type of monitoring and 18 do not.

- The number of states reporting using self-monitoring rose between 1994 and 1997 from 24 to 29.

- Five more states reported coordinating their monitoring with other state agencies in1997, although the actual change involved three states—Florida, New York and South Carolina— that discontinued this practice, and eight states—Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Utah and Wyoming— that adopted it.

- The use of sanctions for non-compliance that do not involve funds was reported for almost the same number of states in 1997 as in 1994, but the changes in specific states were more extensive than that summary would suggest. Ten states started using non-fiscal sanctions in 1997—Alaska, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, South Carolina, Washington and Wyoming, while eight states—Arkansas, Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and West Virginia—discontinued this practice.

- A total of 35 states reported that they were in the process of revising their monitoring system in 1997; in 1994, 31 states reportedly were changing their procedures.

Additional details about individual states are contained in the brief narrative that each state submitted for the survey report. That document was prepared by the RRCs, and it is available from the WRRC where Jim Leinen compiled and edited the final document.

CONCLUSION

With the passage of the 1997 amendments to IDEA, states will be revising their procedures to include the new requirements in their compliance reviews. Continued opportunity for dialogue was seen by participants at the 1997 conference as critical to meeting this need efficiently. The RRFC Monitoring Workgroup will continue to discuss ways to assist states in this process.

Appendix A: OSEP Memorandum

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

March 2, 1995

Contact Persons
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OSEP 95-13

MEMORANDUM

TO : Chief State School Officers

FROM : Thomas Hehir, Director
Office of Special Education
Programs (OSEP)

SUBJECT : Monitoring Procedures of the
Office of Special Education Programs

BACKGROUND

A central role of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is to ensure that States fulfill their responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As stated at 20 USC §1400(c), the purpose of IDEA is to:

> assure that all children with disabilities have available to them ... a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure the rights of children with disabilities and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities, and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Thus, Congress recognized that specially designed instructional services, procedural protections, financial and informational assistance to educational agencies, and ongoing assessment of system effectiveness were all necessary to meet IDEA's ultimate purpose -- to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to appropriate educational services that will enable them to learn to high standards. Accordingly, IDEA sets forth a number of specific requirements, funding authorities, and other

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mechanisms for implementing the Act's purpose, and OSEP recognizes that it must use a combination of compliance, funding, technical assistance, dissemination, and other leadership strategies to improve educational results for all children and youth with disabilities.

Part B of the IDEA sets forth very specific requirements for identifying children with disabilities, ages birth through 21, and for providing a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities, ages three through 21. OSEP and its customers -- children with disabilities and their families -- and its partners -- LEAs, SEAs and advocacy groups -- recognize that an effective accountability system is critical to ensure continuous progress in achieving educational results for children with disabilities.

THE CONTEXT OF MONITORING REFINEMENTS

Over the past year, OSEP has worked -- internally, with other components of the Department, and with our customers -- to reorient and strengthen our monitoring system -- in conjunction with OSEP's research, innovation, and technical assistance efforts -- to serve as an effective vehicle to support systemic reform that will produce better results for students with disabilities, while recognizing the need to continue to look at procedural compliance. In assessing the effectiveness of our current monitoring system and identifying strategies to strengthen that system, we have received input from parents and a myriad of groups that advocate for children with disabilities and their families, and from State directors of special education and monitoring personnel. OSEP has also used data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and other research and experiential resources regarding learner results and systemic reform to inform its assessment of and refinements to its system for ensuring accountability.

Based upon information from all of the sources described above, together with on-going formal and informal dialogue with State educational agencies, advocacy groups, and other OSERS and Department staff, OSEP has identified essential characteristics of a strong accountability system, including:

1. Strong and diverse customer input in the monitoring process.

2. Effective methods for ensuring compliance with Part B and related Federal requirements, with an emphasis on those requirements that relate most directly to continuous improvement in learner results (e.g., those requirements that relate most directly to access to challenging curriculum, effective education together

with students who do not have disabilities, preparation for work, etc.).

3. Prompt identification and correction of deficiencies.

4. Corrective action requirements and strategies that will yield improved access and results for students, rather than simple "paper compliance."

We anticipate that the changes made this year to OSEP's monitoring procedures will be the beginning of a process of further refining its monitoring system over the next several years. OSEP's experience during the 1994-95 school year, and feedback from its customers regarding the revised procedures, will inform the need for further adjustments to its monitoring procedures. Set forth below is a description of the refinements that OSEP is implementing during the 1994-95 school year.

FOCUS OF MONITORING

The NLTS identified several factors that are strong predictors of postschool success in living independently, obtaining employment, and earning higher wages for youth with disabilities. These factors include: high school completion, participation in regular education with appropriate supplementary aids and services, and access to secondary vocational education, including work experience.

OSEP recognizes that while all IDEA requirements are important, some of its requirements have a more direct relationship to student results than others. OSEP further appreciates the importance of focusing monitoring activities on the requirements with the most direct relationship with student results, and on emphasizing those requirements in the corrective action process. OSEP further understands that primary responsibility for each State's compliance with IDEA lies with the State, rather than with OSEP, and that parents must have access to effective systems for ensuring compliance. It is, thus, also critical that OSEP's monitoring system focus on each State's systems for general supervision.

OSEP is, therefore, focusing its compliance reviews on the requirements with the strongest link to results and general supervision. These requirements include:

1. Students with disabilities must have access to the full range of programs and services available to nondisabled children (and the supports and services that they need to learn effectively in those programs), including regular and vocational education programs and curricula and work-experience programs;

2. Individualized education programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities, beginning no later than age 16 (and younger if determined appropriate), must include a statement of needed transition services;

3. Children with disabilities must be educated in the regular education environment, unless their education cannot -- with the use of supplementary aids and services -- be achieved satisfactorily without removal from the regular education environment. A continuum of alternative placements, as described in the Part B regulations, must be available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services and to the extent necessary to implement the IEP for each child with a disability; and

4. Each State must use its systems for general supervision, including its complaint management and due process hearing systems, to ensure that all public agencies comply with the requirements of Part B, including those emphasized above, in providing services to students with disabilities.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

1. CUSTOMER INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT

a. During the Pre-site Phase of the Monitoring Review

(1) Monitoring Schedule
OSEP has begun sending a schedule of all monitoring visits that will occur during the next school year, to a wide range of national organizations that advocate on behalf of students with disabilities and their families. Having this schedule will enable these organizations to assist local advocacy groups and parents of children with disabilities in the affected States in maximizing their input to OSEP regarding appropriate issue foci, sites to visit, and data sources for each State.

(2) Public Meetings
As part of its monitoring review of each State, OSEP conducts one or more public meetings. These meetings give parents, parent and student advocates, educators and other interested individuals and groups an opportunity to provide information to OSEP that will help determine the issues upon which the monitoring review should focus and the sites in which data should be collected to make compliance determinations. OSEP mails a letter to parent and other advocacy organizations within each State, informing them of

the up-coming public meetings and on-site visit to the State, and inviting them to provide input to OSEP (through the public meetings, written comments, and telephone conversations) regarding appropriate issue foci, sites to visit, and data sources.

OSEP has strengthened the public meeting process in two key ways:

(a) Issues Addressed
OSEP has revised the letters used to announce the public meetings. These letters now invite input regarding systemic noncompliance and suggested corrective actions. Interested Parties are specifically asked to address concerns and suggest corrective actions regarding the following monitoring foci:

(i) Factors that may affect placement, such as the State's funding system for special education;

(ii) Access to regular education curricula and programs, including vocational education, and to supports and modifications to enable students with disabilities to learn effectively in regular education environments;

(iii) The development and implementation of needed transition services, including vocational education and work experience;

(iv) Discipline procedures, including suspension and expulsion;

(v) Exemplary State and local educational programs and practices that impact students with disabilities; and

(vi) Disproportionate placement of students, including students from minority backgrounds, in inappropriately restrictive placements.

(b) Groups Invited
OSEP will continue to invite comments at public meetings and written comments from such groups as the State's Parent Training and Information Center(s) (PTI centers), the

State's Protection and Advocacy agency for persons with developmental disabilities and mental illness (P & A), and other agencies that advocate for children and youth with disabilities and their parents. OSEP is broadening the groups invited to include such groups as the State Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), Independent Living Centers (ILCs), organizations that represent specific ethnic or language minorities, and organizations that represent teachers, administrators and school boards.

(3) Outreach Meetings

The participation of diverse individuals and groups in the public meeting and written comment processes has greatly assisted OSEP in preparing for the "on-site" components of the monitoring process. OSEP has noted, however, that dialogue is difficult, if not impossible, in the public meeting format (in which a large number of individuals and organizations wish to provide comments in a limited period of time). OSEP has, therefore, begun to invite groups such as the PTI center(s), P & A, SEAP, and ILCs to outreach meetings in which OSEP can meet with representatives of these groups in a smaller, more interactive group process to receive more comprehensive information. The State's director of special education is also invited to these meetings, so that the State can also benefit from the information provided and questions raised.

(4) OSEP receives a number of "complaint" letters in which parents and other individuals and groups raise allegations that the State educational agency or a local educational agency has acted in a manner inconsistent with the Part B requirements. (OSEP refers these letters to the State for resolution under the State's Part B complaint procedures.) OSEP also receives a number of letters requesting that the Secretary review decisions made by the State educational agency on such complaints.

These complaints and requests for Secretarial review, and the State's response to the complaints that it receives are a very rich source of information regarding compliance issues and the manner in which the State exercises its responsibility for general supervision of all educational programs for students with

disabilities administered within the State. OSEP has implemented more systematic procedures for reviewing and analyzing these letters and related materials as part of its process for identifying appropriate issue foci, sites to visit, and data sources for the on-site visit to each State.

b. During the On-site Phase of the Monitoring Review

(1) OSEP has begun to conduct a parent "focus group" in at least one of the public agencies that it visits as part of our data collection procedures in each State. The purpose of these focus groups is to give parents an opportunity to inform OSEP of their experiences in the development and implementation of an educational program and placement for their children with disabilities.

OSEP invites parents to these meetings from a list of parents of children with disabilities provided by the local educational agency; depending upon State- or district-specific issues or concerns, OSEP may choose to invite parents whose children fall into a specific category (e.g., parents from an ethnic or language minority if placement practices appear to have a disproportional impact on such students, parents of students over the age of sixteen if transition services is a particularly strong concern, etc.).

(2) OSEP may also contact parents who have filed complaints, as part of its data collection to determine the effectiveness of the State's procedures for resolving complaints.

c. During the Post-site Phase of the Compliance Review

(1) As described in greater detail below, OSEP has begun during the 1994-1995 school year to use a more interactive process to develop the corrective action plan component of its monitoring reports. OSEP invites the State educational agency and the Chairperson of the State's SEAP to participate in a meeting or conference call to identify specific corrective action requirements and strategies that will ensure timely compliance and support the State's systemic reform efforts and continuous improvement in learner results.

(2) OSEP provides a copy of its monitoring report and the agreed-upon corrective action plan to all individuals and organizations that request copies.

2. TIMELY IDENTIFICATION AND CORRECTION OF DEFICIENCIES

a. - Expedited Procedures for Final Monitoring Reports

In the past, OSEP has issued separate draft and final monitoring reports. OSEP and many of our customers have been concerned that the issuance of a draft report, followed by 30 to 60 days for the State to respond, then a further period of time for OSEP to analyze the State's response and prepare the final report, has resulted in unnecessary delays in the initiation and completion of needed corrective actions. As OSEP has strengthened its procedures for ensuring that its draft reports are accurate and clear, it has noted that very few significant changes occur in findings and corrective actions from draft to final reports, further underlining the widespread recognition that the issuance of draft reports is unnecessarily delaying corrective action and attendant systemic reform.

Beginning with the 1994-95 monitoring cycle, OSEP will no longer issue separate draft and final reports. Instead, OSEP will issue a single final monitoring report to the Chief State School Officer and the State director of special education. As noted in the report's cover letter, the State will have 15 calendar days from the date on which it receives the OSEP report within which to submit a letter to the OSEP director documenting any instances in the report in which a finding is without legal and/or factual support. If OSEP determines that it is necessary to delete or revise a finding, a letter setting forth the deletion or revision will be appended as a part of the official report.

b. "Follow-up Visits" to Determine Effectiveness of Corrective Actions

OSEP conducted a pilot "follow-up" visit during the 1993-1994 school year, and plans to conduct follow-up visits each year , including up to five visits during the 1994-1995 school year. The purpose of these focused visits, the majority of which are scheduled within twelve to twenty-four months after the State has received its final monitoring report, is to determine the extent to which the State has effectively

implemented selected components of the agreed-upon corrective action plan.

3. CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIREMENTS AND STRATEGIES YIELDING IMPROVED ACCESS AND RESULTS FOR STUDENTS

In the past, each OSEP monitoring report has included a corrective action plan developed by OSEP with limited dialogue with the State. OSEP recognizes that to better ensure that corrective actions positively impact student results in a State, it is important to include the State in the development of the corrective action requirements and to integrate technical assistance with the development, implementation, and evaluation of the corrective actions. Beginning with the 1994-1995 school year, OSEP is, therefore, implementing the following revised procedures for the development of a corrective action plan for each monitoring report that includes one or more findings of noncompliance:

a. Each report will set forth parameters for the development of a corrective action plan. These parameters will, for each finding, specify the relevant Federal requirement(s) and expected results of corrective action relating to that finding. The extent to which the report will prescribe the specific steps that the State must follow to ensure correction, and specific timelines for each step, will depend upon a configuration of factors, including the severity of the findings, and the persistence of the identified noncompliance (including whether the same violations were identified in a previous monitoring report).

b. The cover letter to each report will invite the State to meet with OSEP (here in Washington or through a conference telephone conversation) to establish more specific steps and timelines for the corrective action plan. OSEP will also invite the chairperson of the State's Special Education Advisory Panel to participate in the meeting or conference call, and will encourage the State to invite additional resource people, such as Regional Resource Center staff, who could assist in the development of the corrective action plan.

The cover letter to the report will also inform the State that the corrective action plan must be developed within 45 days of the State's receipt of the report. If a corrective action plan is not jointly developed within 45 days, OSEP will

unilaterally develop a detailed corrective action plan for the State.

c. As part of the process of developing each report, monitoring staff will meet with other OSEP staff who are knowledgeable about technical assistance resources, including systems change initiatives, research and dissemination projects, Regional Resource Centers and other technical assistance centers, etc. In this meeting, OSEP will identify resources that could assist OSEP and the State in the development of a corrective action plan, and the State in the implementation of a plan, in a manner that will ensure compliance and support systemic reform that will result in improved student results.

I appreciate your efforts to continue to improve educational opportunities for students in your State and look forward to working with you and your staff.

cc: State Directors of Special Education
Parent Training and Information Centers
Protection and Advocacy Agencies
Secretary's Regional Representatives
Regional Resource Centers
Federal Resource Center
Independent Living Centers

Appendix B: Kansas Materials

This document contains boxed items that should be familiar to a building in the existing school improvement process. However, these items are not to be considered additional but supportive to the proposed changes highlighted with shading that are being discussed, throughout, for the Five Year Continuous Improvement Plan. **These are only suggestions**. The building, district, or local educational entity will submit assurances to the Student Support Services Team every year. As a part of the assurances or local plan Student Support Services will work with the educational entity to develop and complete a Continuous Improvement Plan.

5-Year Plan for Continuous Improvement

Year One

Processes that are already in place or being conducted at the building level for school improvement.

Make sure all staff are involved and all students are part of the building data.

A needs assessment is conducted.
This could be through a building survey, listing of concerns, in an informal and/or formal manner.

Staff Development priorities are listed, discussed, etc.
A building is asked to submit their top three priorities for staff development. That does not exclude addressing other priorities in that building. Levels of staff development to be considered are-non-use, awareness, demonstration, implementation, and transfer. This is connected to Results Based Staff Development.

Surveys are being conducted (students, community/business, staff and administration).
The survey would focus on the educational services being provided for all students and suggestions for improvement.

A building profile is updated
The building profile provides data to use in making decisions for school improvement. Background Information, Student Performance Data, and Staff and Community Development are some of the sections that may be included in this stand-alone document.

Building Level Special Education Staff with Special Education Administration may conduct:

Student file review
This is to be done collaboratively. The building can use the existing forms provided by the Student Support Services Team.

Administrative file review
Special Education Administration along with Building Administration will work collaboratively on the Administrative file review. Forms and requirements provided by the Student Support Services Team.

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The purpose of the file reviews will be to:

- Identify areas of concern
- Issues needing attention from previous corrective actions
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Develop a corrective action plan

Corrective Action Plan:

Develop a corrective action plan including a timeline, to correct areas identified and send it to Student Support Services File Review Contact for review.

Begin preparation for the File Review Mini Visit

The File Review Mini Visit will allow buildings to bring to a team what they have found from their own file reviews, present their findings, and dialogue what plans *have been* or *will be* put into place to correct any errors or issues of concern that were found. It will also allow the team to look at the established plan and timelines to discuss further planning, etc.

Year Two

Processes that are already in place or being conducted at the building level.

Make sure all staff are involved and all students are part of the building data.

Data Collection and Use

- Continue to gather data for the building profile
- Disaggregate the data (gender, race/ethnicity, SES)
- Focus on data related to targeted areas
- Implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP)
- Review building profile for data relating to all students
- Collaborate together to prepare data on assessments, evaluation, etc.
- Review the SIP and the strategies to determine which ones are being implemented and have data to support the targeted area/goal
- Prepare Staff Development Data
- Familiarize you staff, site council, etc. with building data and how to interpret the information
- Bring staff up to date with the assessment measures and how they are to be evaluated

******Consider adding a member from the File Review Team to the visiting Quality Performance Accreditation Team (QPA) when selections are being discussed.**

Special Education Administration and Special Ed. Staff.

Organize student and administrative information from the file review
Organize and hold a file review mini visit

The components of a File Review Mini Visit:

The "File Review Mini Team" visit may take place by the end of December of the second year.

The building will present their findings, and information in an organized manner from their file review, conducted locally, during Year One.

The File Review Mini Team will consist of individuals who have been trained (Student Support Services) as well as those selected by a local building to serve as a member.

The chair will be selected from a list of trained individuals from KSDE, and have no former relationship to the district within the last five years.

The team will review the information presented, previous corrective action plan and recommendations, timelines, and the action taken. They will write a report on their findings, recommendations, and/or technical assistance and send it to KSDE.
KSDE will review the report and respond to the chair and building within 30 working days.

After the File Review Mini Visit, the Student Support Services Contact will:

Contact the Special Education Administrator to review the report
Contact the chair if questions
Review the timelines
Conduct a "spot" visit if needed
Review for Site Council Representation

Year Three and Year Four

Processes that are already in place or being conducted at the building level.

Make sure all staff are involved and all students are part of the building data.

Implementation of the School Improvement Plan
Continue to collect, analyze, refocus, and utilize data
Continue to check alignment of curriculum, standards and assessments

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Expectations for Special Education Administrators, Building Level Team, and Building Administration:

- Conduct reviews of student files on targeted areas determined by Student Support Services and the local educational entity (building, district, interlocal)
- Continue to look at the connection between the IEP, curriculum, and the school improvement plan
- Discuss strategies
- Review for accommodations
- Determine criteria or review the criteria for performance based measures
- Implement locally developed measures (Alignment is very important)
- Make sure strategies are being implemented by ALL
- Determine if student needs are being met
- Continue to gather data related to targeted areas/goals
- Continue to review the state curriculum standards
- Begin preparation for year five

Year Five

Processes that are already in place or being conducted at the building level.

Make sure all staff are involved and all students are part of the building data.

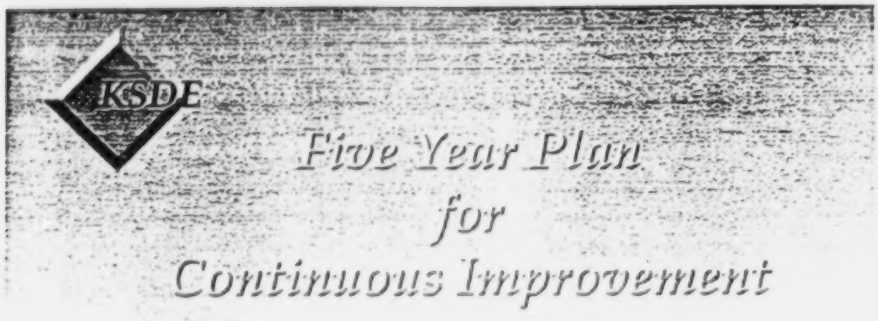
- Update the building profile with current data including student with special needs
- Have data organized related to the targeted areas/goals
- Have data related to the accreditation criteria
- Be prepared to analyze the data before the "Accreditation Visit" to support the decisions made, to be clear on what improvement was/was not made, circumstances that affected the improvement, etc.

Also, during the fifth year:

- Buildings will hold their accreditation visit
- Reports are written from the team conducting the visit and a recommendation will be made based upon the visit and information
- The report is sent to KSDE and the recommendation(s) are acted upon by the Kansas State Board of Education

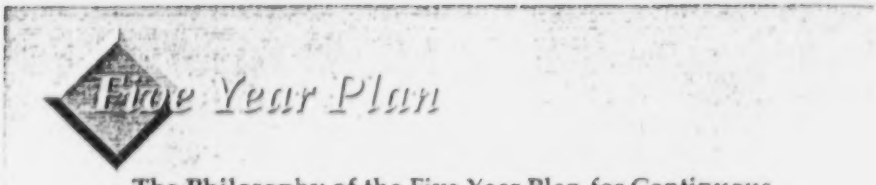
Review Process:

- In addition to the team visit, a review of files may formally be conducted from Student Support Services. How this will take place will vary, depending upon the findings from the "File Review Mini Team Visit." This could be a visit of one to three days.
- **On the successful completion of a cycle, the school improvement process is to be continued within the next cycle using revised and refined data.**



MOVING FROM AN EVENT
TO A PROCESS

1



The Philosophy of the Five Year Plan for Continuous Improvement reflects the changes that are occurring throughout the nation as well as the state of Kansas.

In Kansas, the state accreditation system facilitates the school improvement process. It directs school buildings to move from a fragmented, management driven system to a more student-focused system. Also in Kansas, the compliance or monitoring system facilitates districts, special purpose schools, youth centers, cooperatives and inter-locals through a regulatory procedural model that reviews files and bases decisions derived from their findings.

2

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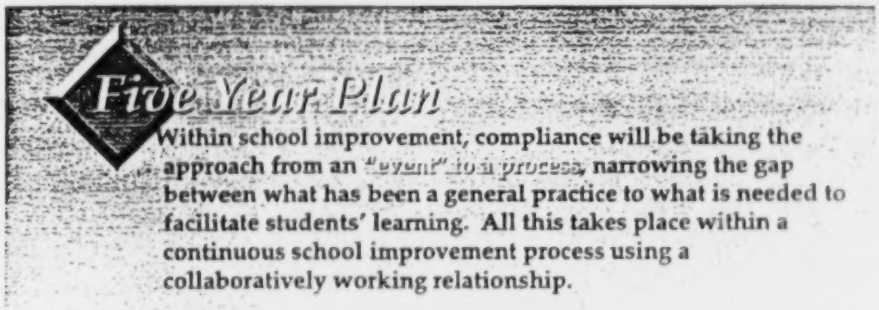
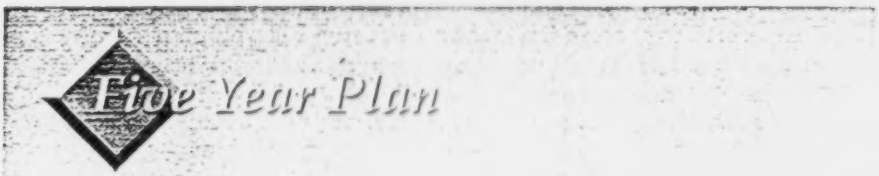
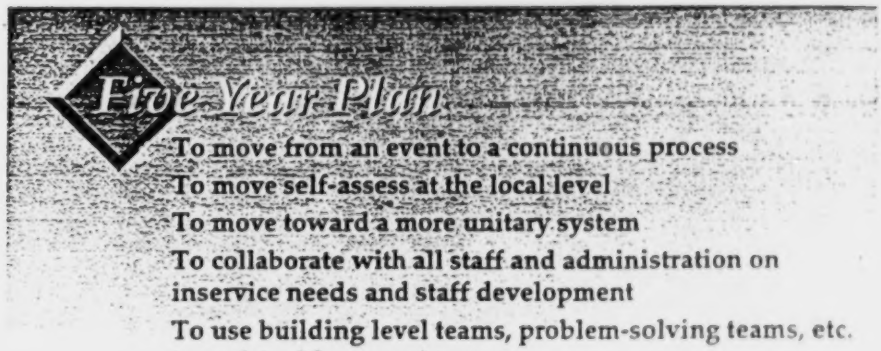
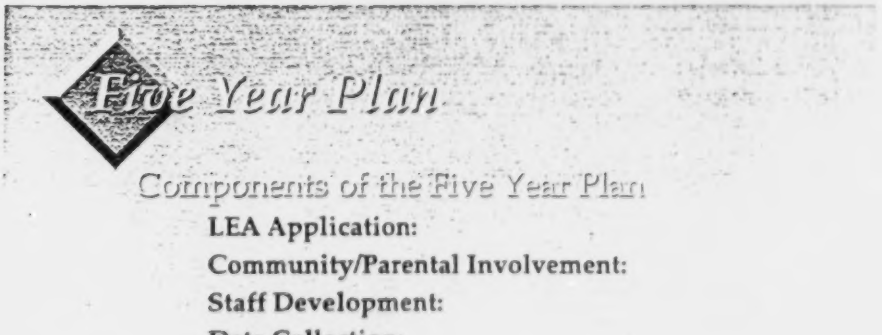

Five Year Plan
Within school improvement, compliance will be taking the approach from an "event" to a process, narrowing the gap between what has been a general practice to what is needed to facilitate students' learning. All this takes place within a continuous school improvement process using a collaboratively working relationship.
Taking a student-focused approach also broadens the scope of individual instruction to meeting the needs of each student in an individual building through higher standards and expectations. Although this approach may sound familiar to those who serve students with exceptionalities, it challenges them to broaden their views. They have to make time for planning, implementation and evaluation. They have to examine what they have to offer each student before different expectations are established.
3



Rationale behind the discussion of the
Five Year Continuous
Improvement Plan

4


Five Year Plan
To move from an event to a continuous process
To move self-assess at the local level
To move toward a more unitary system
To collaborate with all staff and administration on inservice needs and staff development
To use building level teams, problem-solving teams, etc. to assist with preassessment
To help buildings own their students with exceptionalities
To tie compliance to school improvement efforts already established in Kansas schools
To maintain the rights and integrity for students



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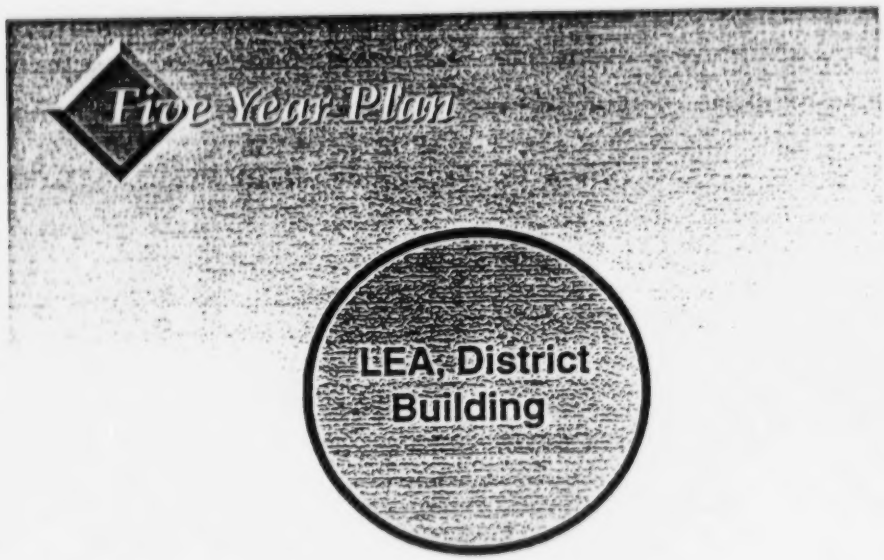
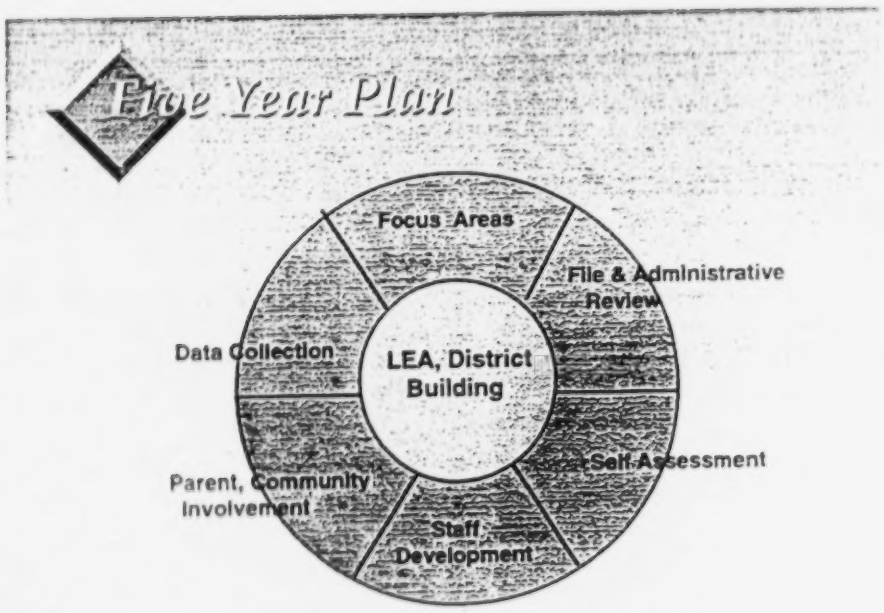
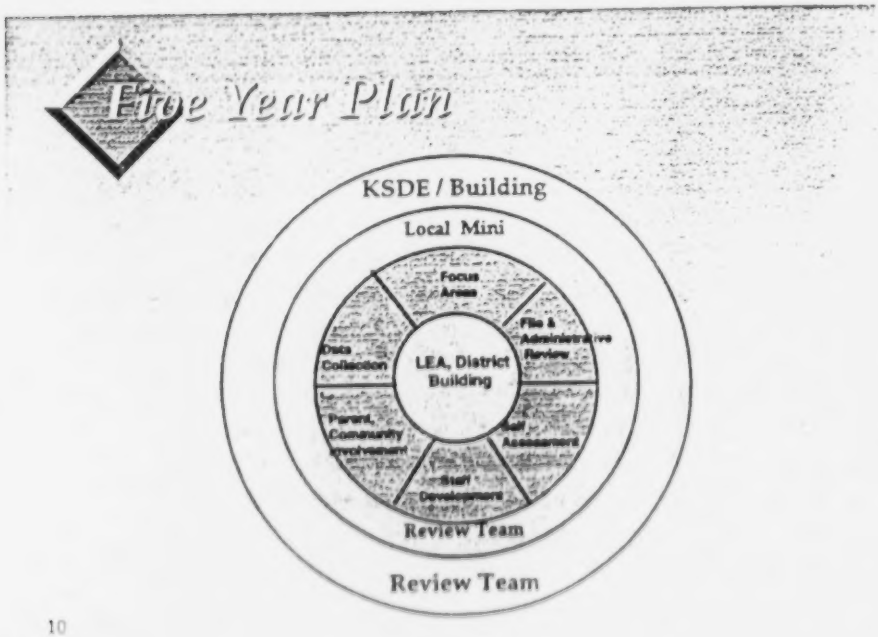

Five Year Plan
LEA, District
Building


Five Year Plan
Focus Areas
File & Administrative
Review
Data Collection
LEA, District
Building
Self-Assessment
Parent, Community
Involvement
Staff
Development



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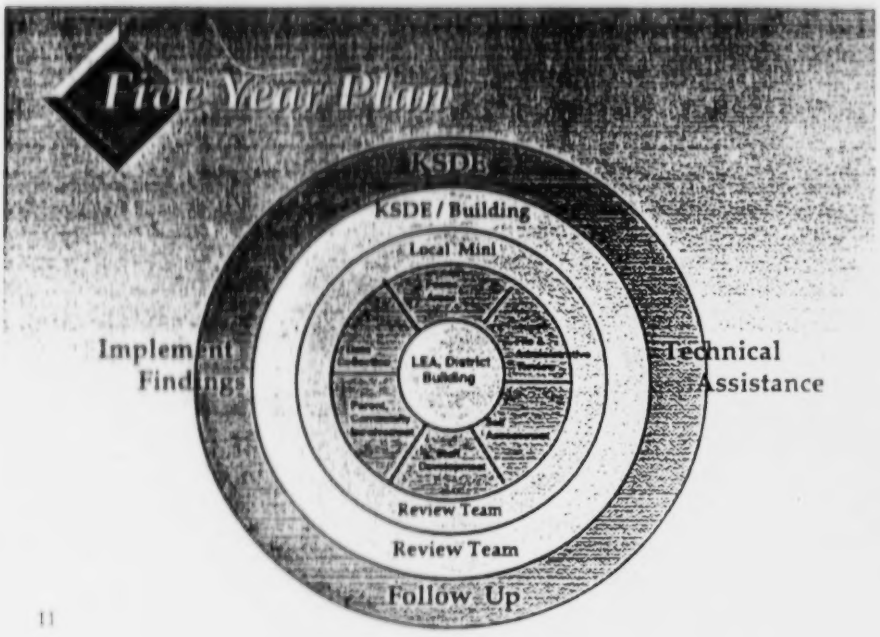
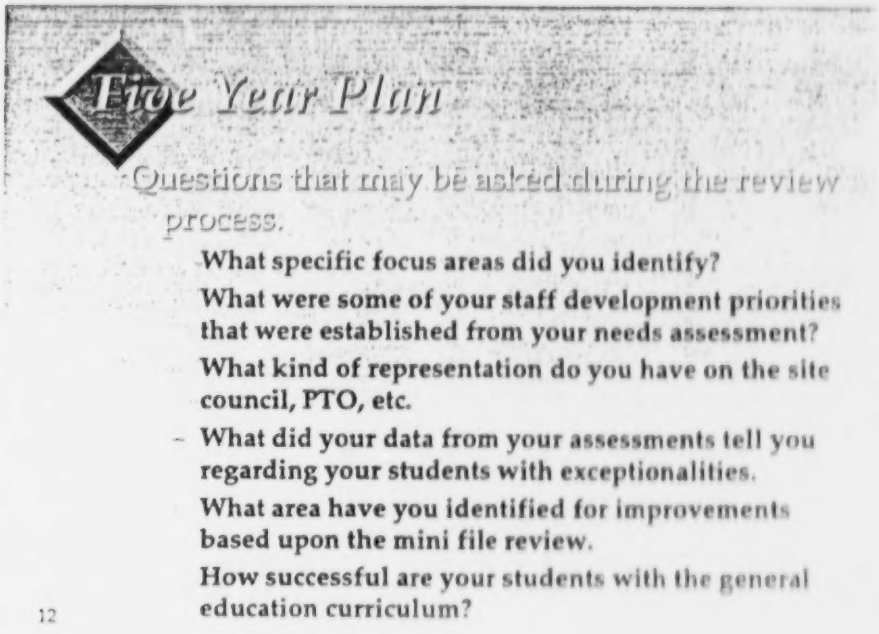

Five Year Plan
KSDE
KSDE / Building
Local Mini
LEA, District Building
Review Team
Review Team
Follow Up
Implement Findings
Technical Assistance

11


Five Year Plan
Questions that may be asked during the review process.
What specific focus areas did you identify?
What were some of your staff development priorities that were established from your needs assessment?
What kind of representation do you have on the site council, PTO, etc.
What did your data from your assessments tell you regarding your students with exceptionalities.
What area have you identified for improvements based upon the mini file review.
How successful are your students with the general education curriculum?

12

Five Year Plan

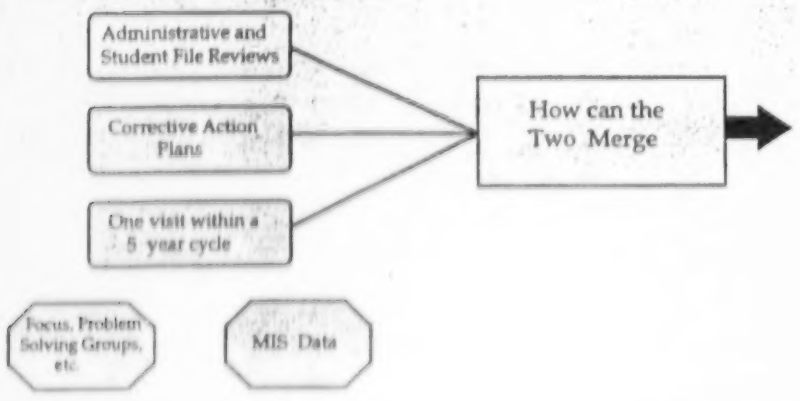
Resource List

- Items existing with the Director of Special Education:
  - **State Plan**
  - **State and Federal Regulations**
  - **Kansas Memorandums of Clarification**
  - **Updated OSEP letters**
- Items that will be apart of the resource package:
  - Current Focus Sheets
  - Computerized Program for MIS

13

Five Year Plan

Current Compliance


Administrative and Student File Reviews
Corrective Action Plans
One visit within a 5 year cycle
How can the Two Merge
Focus, Problem Solving Groups, etc.
MIS Data

14

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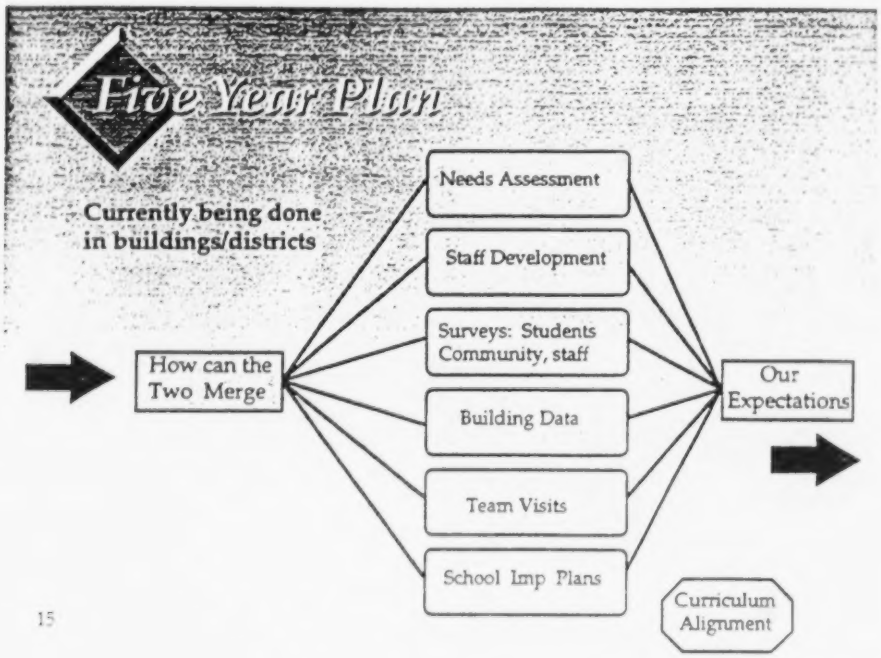
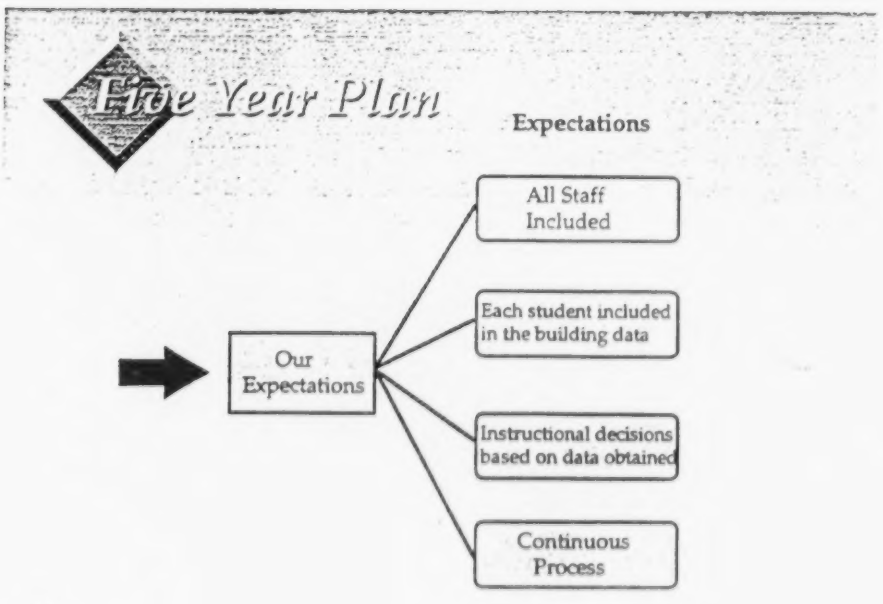
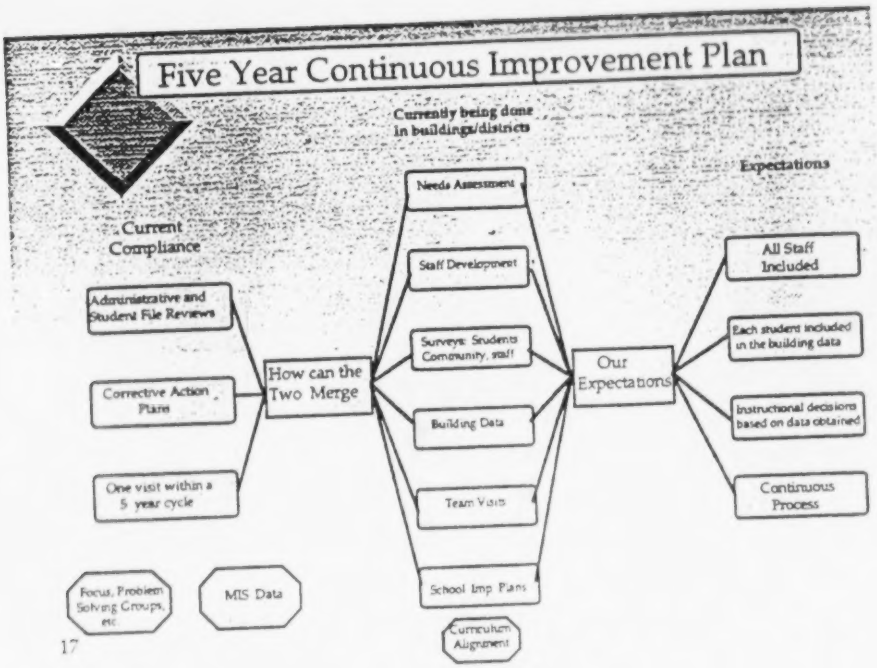

Five Year Plan
Currently being done in buildings/districts
How can the Two Merge
Needs Assessment
Staff Development
Surveys: Students Community, staff
Building Data
Team Visits
School Imp Plans
Our Expectations
Curriculum Alignment
15


Five Year Plan
Expectations
Our Expectations
All Staff Included
Each student included in the building data
Instructional decisions based on data obtained
Continuous Process
16



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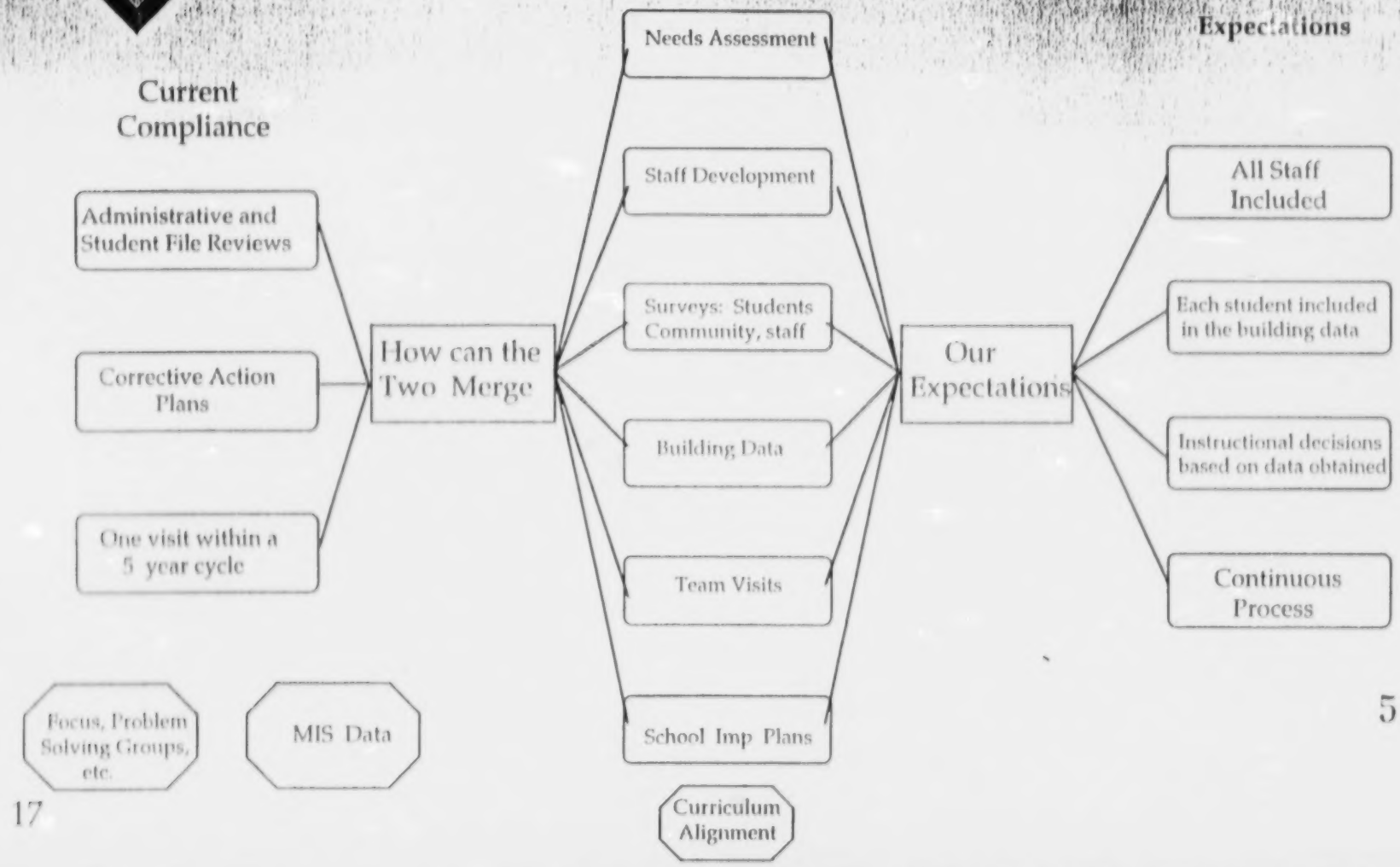
Five Year Continuous Improvement Plan



Appendix C: California Materials

1 ☐ *AN INTEGRATED MONITORING MODEL:*
California's
Coordinated Compliance Review (CCR) Process

Presented by Ted Hawthorne

and

Catherine Conrado

2 ☐ *Demographics*

- 5,467,000 students
- > 10% of nation's student population
- 565,000 special education students
- 999 school districts (range=19 to 660,000 students); approx.. 8000 schools
- 116 special education local plan areas (SELPAs)
- Ethnicity: 40% Caucasian; 60% other
- LEP: 1,381,393 students (25%)

3 ☐ *Structure of CCR*

- Districts reviewed every 4 years
- Approx.. 250 districts reviewed per year
  - LAUSD: 1/4 each yr..
- Special education staff assigned by SELPA
- All programs organized into 7 teams by county

4 ☐ *Overview of CCR Process*

- SEA selects LEAs in cycle for review
- LEAs attend CCR trainings
- LEAs conduct self-reviews using Guide
- LEAs submit findings and student achievement data
- SEA reviews findings and student data
- SEA notifies LEAs of dates, programs, sites
- SEA conducts reviews

5 ☐ *Types of Reviews*

- Full Team
- Modifications of full team reviews (for Special Education)
  - » SELPA level
  - » District level
- Document
  - At SEA offices
  - No LEA staff present
  - Report format and follow-up process same as for full team

6 *Full Team Review Process*

- Initial contact/schedule developed with LEA by team leader
- Team follows planned schedule
  - Entrance meeting
  - LEA program administrators meeting
  - Reviews records
  - Observes classes
  - Interviews staff, students and parents

7 *Full Team Process, cont'd*

- Negotiate issues between
  - team members
  - LEA personnel
- Produce single report encompassing
  - all categorical students with "IPI"
  - commendations and noncompliance items
  - individual program components
- Final meetings
  - pre-exit (final negotiations with LEA admin.)
  - exit (read-out only)

8 *Full Team Review: Follow Up*

- CCR maintains integrated database/tracking system
- LEA submits corrective actions with evidence
- Team members/individual programs to monitor corrective actions
- Continues until all items cleared or sanctions implemented

9 *Advantages of a Coordinated Process*

- CCR unit schedules all reviews
- Programs share authority, fiscal and personnel resources with CCR unit
- CCR unit organizes statewide LEA trainings: 8 two-day trainings per year
- Uniform compliance tracking system
- Gender/ethnically balanced teams
- Team members learn other programs

10 *Advantages (cont'd)*

- Involves SEA staff with Field Colleagues
- Special education viewed as part of total educational environment
- Provides team support/collaboration
- Serves as problem-solving mechanism for LEA
- Elevates special ed in importance & focus to superintendents and boards

11 ☐ *Disadvantages to a Coordinated Process*

- Programs must participate
- Reduced flexibility in time, dates, choice of districts
- Potential dissension between team members
- May compromise on issues for sake of unity

12 ☐ *Disadvantages (cont'd)*

- Requires more intensity, longer hours for special education reviewers
- Increased workload for Team Leader
- Limited site visits may limit systemic change

13 ☐ *Changes for 1997-98*

- Every school site conducts self-review & submits results
- Every school site submits achievement data for all students

14 ☐ *Current Issues in Special Education*

- Coordination between Part C and Part H
- Challenges to assignment of reviewers
- Access CCR data

Appendix D: New York Materials

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
SPECIAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

REVIEW CATEGORY	REASON WHY DISTRICT SELECTED FOR CATEGORY	WHAT REVIEW WILL INCLUDE	WHAT SED ROLE WILL BE
Quality Assurance Verification Review	Meets or exceeds most or all of VESID's strategic plan goals that support IDEA as evidenced by data related to 11 key performance indicators (KPIs) listed below	• Desk audit of LEA application submission, including verification of KPI data • Discussion of practices which helped achieve results • Review of history of parent complaint issues	• Conduct data verification, probably on-site • Conduct desk audit • VESID creates list of successful practices

Quality Assurance Collaborative Review	Exhibits average performance in meeting goals, as evidenced by KPI data	• Comprehensive Quality Assurance review conducted by following team:
		  • special education director
		  • building principal
		  • parent
		  • general education teacher
		  • special education teacher
		  • related services provider or compensatory education teacher
		  • VESID Regional Associate
		  • Others, as appropriate
			• Regional Associate (RA) serves as active member of review team
			• RA approves Final Report, including Quality Improvement Plan
			• RA monitors implementation of plan
			• VESID creates list of successful practices

Quality Assurance Facilitated Review	District data suggests that a QA Facilitated Review offers a high potential for significant progress toward VESID goals.	Phase One: • Verification of KPI data, as needed • District team, under general direction of District Superintendent, conducts intensive self-review and develops plan to improve student results in specific areas Phase Two: • Quality Assurance Collaborative Review	• RA serves as active member of review team • Conduct data verification • Provide structured process for development and approval of improvement plan • Coordinate activities and communication between district team and District Superintendent • Coordinate commitment of SED resources to support improvement plan

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Grade 3 Reading PEP test scores*
- Grade 3 Math PEP test scores*
- Grade 6 Reading PEP test scores*
- Grade 6 Math PEP test scores*
- Reading RCT test scores*
- Math RCT test scores*
- Numbers and types of diplomas awarded*
- Dropout incidence
- Classification rate
- Integration in general education classrooms
- Placement in separate settings
- Over representation of minorities (new for 1998-99)

*These indicators receive heavier weighting

A Progress Report on New York State's Special Education Quality Assurance System

January 1998

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SPECIAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

DRAMATIC CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE

Some very positive and dramatic changes have taken place over the past two years in regard to the State Education Department's special education monitoring system. A statewide special education Quality Assurance (QA) Advisory Group has worked with VESID staff during that time to transform our monitoring system into one of Quality Assurance. The group is composed of teachers, parents, school and BOCES administrators, preschool and private school staff, and representatives from the Legislature, New York State School Boards Association and other constituencies. The group's guidance and advice have led to fundamental conceptual and procedural changes in the manner in which school district special education programs are now being monitored.

Conceptually, a system that previously focused upon procedural compliance now focuses on program effectiveness and student results. Procedurally, a system which always depended upon Department site reviews now involves collaborative program reviews with district staff, parents and the Department working together on the development and implementation of plans which ensure both procedural compliance and program improvement. Importantly, the goal of the collaborative review process is to make programs more effective and improve outcomes for students while still ensuring that Federal requirements are followed and that the protections which are guaranteed to students with disabilities and their parents are enforced.

Collaborative reviews are performed by a team composed of general education and special education staff, administrators and parents, as well as the VESID Regional Associate (RA). The team reviews and evaluates the district's performance in key programmatic areas (e.g., "appropriate modified grade level instructional materials based on the general education curriculum are available for all special education students and are used by all instructional, related service and support staff"), as well as in the procedural areas of Evaluations, Due Process, Free Appropriate Public Education, Least Restrictive Environment, Facilities and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (e.g., "are required transition services participants invited to IEP meetings?").

The process also includes formal surveys of parents, staff and administrators, both in special education and general education. Parents, for example, are asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: "I feel that I am welcome in my child's school and I am treated with respect." Both teachers and administrators are asked to respond to such statements as: "I have high expectations for students with disabilities and expect them to achieve commensurate with their general education peers." The survey results allow the district to compare the perceptions of the different constituencies in regard to a variety of special education issues, and the district's review team may choose to focus on a problem area identified through the surveys when they develop their plans for programmatic improvement.

In addition, the Department prepares a district-specific special education data report which provides vital information on how students with disabilities are placed, how they

achieve and how they exit the district's programs. The results of the programmatic and procedural reviews, the data report and the survey summaries form the basis of the district's Compliance Assurance Plan and Quality Improvement Plan which, together, not only ensure that procedural compliance is achieved but, more importantly, that plans are made and implemented to address opportunities for programmatic improvement.

DATA DRIVE THE SYSTEM

The new system is data driven and results oriented. The review of district-specific data over the past two years for all districts provides the basis for VESID's determination of how often a district will be reviewed and the type of review. Whereas, in the past, each district was scheduled for a review once every seven years, regardless of performance, the Department now establishes its review schedule on the basis of demonstrated outcomes for students with disabilities. The following eleven key criteria, drawn from VESID's Strategic Plan, are used to categorize districts:

- Grade 3 Reading PEP test scores
- Grade 3 Math PEP test scores
- Grade 6 Reading PEP test scores
- Grade 6 Math PEP test scores
- Reading RCT test scores
- Math RCT test scores
- Numbers and types of diplomas awarded
- Dropout incidence
- Classification rate
- Integration in general education classrooms
- Placements in separate settings
- Over representation of minorities (new for 1998-99)

A review of the statewide data has shown a great disparity among districts in these key areas. Therefore, a continuum of program review options related to student results has been developed. The results for some districts are so positive that the need for a comprehensive on-site review is not indicated. These districts, which meet or exceed VESID goals in all or most areas related to achievement and integration, would continue to submit data annually and desk audits would occur once every seven years. The results for other districts reflect a failure to meet VESID goals in most areas and the Quality Assurance process must be intensified. The collaborative review itself must be preceded by a period of at least one year of intensive self-review, improvement planning and technical assistance. This could permit greater targeting of Department staff to these districts and contracting with an outside agency to assist in the coordination of the peer reviews. The remaining districts will participate in the Quality Assurance collaborative review process when scheduled, and we will investigate a revised process of peer reviews in conjunction with the current Quality Assurance review process.

VESID staff will annually review current data related to the eleven key criteria for each district in the State. This data will be used to focus staff and other resources by identifying for the following school year:

- Quality Assurance Verification Reviews, which will include those districts which meet or exceed all or most VESID goals and, therefore, will receive a desk audit and data verification;

- Quality Assurance Collaborative Reviews, which will include those districts which exhibit average performance in meeting goals, as evidenced by KPI data, and which are appropriate for a Quality Assurance review; and

- Quality Assurance Facilitated Reviews, which will include those districts from which data suggests that a QA Facilitated Review offers a high potential for significant progress toward VESID goals.

As a first step, the VESID special education regional supervisors will be meeting with the District Superintendents to discuss how they and the Department can work together to improve results in those districts which have failed to meet the goals in most areas, based upon the 1995-96 data. Although special education staff will propose a structured process for addressing the areas of lowest performance and will provide technical assistance throughout the process, specific strategies for improvement must be developed by a representative team in each district. District Superintendents and, through them, Superintendents of Schools, will be expected to take a leadership role in facilitating the necessary systems changes. Department staff must be viewed as agents of the Commissioner working in support of initiatives taken at the local level.

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES ARE THE FOCUS

Just as data are used to determine the type, intensity and timing of each review, data developed during a collaborative review are used to determine the content of the two plans which mark the culmination of each review.

The Compliance Assurance Plan reflects procedural violations identified during the review and describes the changes in policy or procedure undertaken by the district to ensure future compliance. In the past the RA made such determinations and notified district staff of the corrective actions required. Under the Quality Assurance system, the RA is one member of a team of district stakeholders. By virtue of the team taking ownership of the identification and correction of deficiencies, it is believed that there is a better understanding of underlying problems and a greater chance of lasting compliance.

The Quality Improvement Plan has no parallel in the old monitoring system. The collaborative review team conducts an analysis of all of the findings of the review, including the District Data Summary Report; Parent, Staff and Administrator Survey results; the Programmatic Issues section and other documentation collected by the team. That

analysis leads to the designation of two or more priority areas related to achievement and/or integration with nondisabled peers, consistent with VESID's Strategic Plan, in which the district seeks to improve its performance. The Quality Improvement Plan describes each priority area as well as the action steps to be taken, a timeline for completion and an evaluation component.

Attachment A is a copy of the Quality Improvement Plan developed by West Canada Valley CSD at the conclusion of its 1996-97 collaborative review. Through the implementation of this Plan, the district intends to improve its performance in the areas of access to extracurricular activities, changes in instruction to improve seventh and eighth grade achievement and relocation of special education services from separate sites to district buildings. These efforts will be supported by the Department through the awarding of an IDEA discretionary grant to the district to fund specific activities designed to improve student achievement and integration.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS DRIVE SYSTEM CHANGES

Another major change to the previous monitoring system is the flexible nature of the Quality Assurance process and the consistent use of customer feedback to drive system changes. As a result of the feedback of QA participants across New York State and the advice of the Quality Assurance Advisory Group, numerous revisions have been made to the original design. Most notably, we have moved from a one-semester review (either fall or spring) to a year-long process as a result of the reports from school districts that additional time was needed to complete the review and develop the needed plans for improvement. In response to problems cited by some districts in maintaining consistency in review team membership, we will now schedule pre-review, midway and endpoint meetings with the Superintendent to ensure continuing support for the process as the year progresses.

In addition, we will be working with parents and others to significantly shorten and simplify the parent survey. Based on the feedback we believe that one reason for the poor rate of return of the parent survey is its length and the complicated nature of some of the questions. We intend to have a shorter and simpler survey ready for the 1998-99 school year. We have also redesigned the record keeping forms and the format of the Quality Improvement Plan based on the participant evaluations completed by the QA team members.

A summary of evaluations received from 255 review team participants from 40 school districts reviewed during the 1996-97 school year, including parents, administrators, teachers and other general education and special education staff, reflects their strong, positive responses:

- 95 percent said that the Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan developed by the district will have a more positive and lasting impact on the district than a corrective action plan imposed by the Department.

- 89 percent said that the Quality Assurance collaborative review process will have a positive impact on the district's efforts to achieve the Regents strategic plan goals, as well as its relationship with the Department.

- 93 percent said that the collaborative review process encouraged the involvement of a broad group of stakeholders.

- 93 percent said that the collaborative review process supports a shift in focus from strict procedural compliance to improved student results.

- 93 percent said the collaborative review process is a considerable improvement over the Department's former special education monitoring system.

NEXT STEPS

1) The schedule of district reviews, based on what was a seven-year cycle, will now be examined to prioritize for an earlier review than anticipated those districts which fail to meet most VESID goals.

2) Pursuant to Section 116 of Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997, VESID will identify and notify districts with special education referral rates that are significantly higher than the statewide average, those which evidence an over-reliance on restrictive placements, or those with other significant documented problems. These districts will be required to submit a response to the issues identified and offer an explanation for each identified issue. This procedure will in essence serve as the first step in our Quality Assurance efforts with the lowest performing districts, as well as those districts which evidence problems related to priority objectives.

3) VESID special education field staff will monitor the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plans developed by the 1996-97 review districts, and will do likewise in each succeeding year, to ensure that the plans were fully implemented, evaluations by the review teams were conducted, and the objectives related to improved achievement or integration were met.

4) The Quality Assurance review process is currently used with school districts only. VESID staff will be developing similar review protocols for preschools, BOCES and other types of programs for which we are responsible.

District West Canada Valley CSD

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN
PART II
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Quality Improvement Plan consists of a minimum of two priority areas, one of which appears on this page. These priorities were designated by the review team based upon an analysis of all of the review findings including the District Data Summary Report; Parent, Staff and Administrator Survey results; protocol summary forms; programmatic issues section; and other documentation collected by the team. These priorities are designed to impact upon areas of greatest weakness and to result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities in regard to achievement and/or integration with nondisabled peers.

Quality Improvement Area # 1

Increase access to those students who are being educated at the Herkimer County BOCES to extracurricular activities taking place at West Canada Valley. Subjective observation suggests that it is rare that those students who attend BOCES are participating in West Canada Valley extracurricular events. Integration of the West Canada Valley students is the ultimate goal and desired outcome.

Planned Steps for Improvement: (Including evaluation of results)

1) Send parents of BOCES students a copy of the student handbook which specifies the activities all students have access to.

2) Send home a copy of the West Canada Valley monthly calendar that includes all special events (e.g., dances, concerts, games, etc.).

Evaluation: Students who are attending educational programs outside of West Canada Valley (e.g., Herkimer BOCES), will be questioned directly at the end of the school year (i.e., annual reviews) as to their participation in West Canada Valley activities. Note: Parents may provide this information as well.

Timeline For Completion: 7/1/98

Attachment A

District West Canada Valley CSD

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN
PART II
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Quality Improvement Plan consists of a minimum of two priority areas, one of which appears on this page. These priorities were designated by the review team based upon an analysis of all of the review findings including the District Data Summary Report; Parent, Staff and Administrator Survey results; protocol summary forms; programmatic issues section; and other documentation collected by the team. These priorities are designed to impact upon areas of greatest weakness and to result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities in regard to achievement and/or integration with nondisabled peers.

Quality Improvement Area # 2 :

Revise seventh and eighth grade instruction. It appears that students who are identified as having a disability experience a great deal of difficulty achieving in seventh and eighth grade. An analysis and review of the grades that these students earn seem to support the observation noted above.

Planned Steps for Improvement: (Including evaluation of results)

Provide more teacher training to focus on methods to adjust instruction (e.g., teaching to multiple intelligences), clarify and develop content expectations, increasing anticipatory learning set, use of advanced organizers, writing outlines for students and using these outlines for test/exam blue prints, use of multi-modal approaches, etc.

Evaluation: Track seventh and eighth grade failure rates to determine effectiveness of instructional modifications.

Timeline For Completion: 12/1/97 and ongoing

District West Canada Valley CSD

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN
PART II
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Quality Improvement Plan consists of a minimum of two priority areas, one of which appears on this page. These priorities were designated by the review team based upon an analysis of all of the review findings including the District Data Summary Report; Parent, Staff and Administrator Survey results; protocol summary forms; programmatic issues section; and other documentation collected by the team. These priorities are designed to impact upon areas of greatest weakness and to result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities in regard to achievement and/or integration with nondisabled peers.

Quality Improvement Area # 3 :

Provide special education services as close to West Canada Valley as possible. A review of students' placements suggests that there are a few students who receive their programs a distance from West Canada Valley (e.g., Herkimer BOCES, Oneida BOCES). The ultimate goal is to maximize integration of all students.

Planned Steps for Improvement: (Including evaluation of results)

1) Explore ability to develop a career awareness program in the West Canada Valley CSD.

2) Expand West Canada Valley's special education program to include a 12-month component (i.e., summer school component).

Proposed outcome is to improve and expand special education program locally. Evaluation: At the end of the school year, determine if more students were able to receive appropriate special education services at the West Canada Valley School location.

Timeline For Completion:

Appendix E: Monitors' Organization Survey Report

Do State Special Education Monitors Need Their Own Organization?

Ken Olsen
University of Kentucky

Draft August, 1997 (Not to be cited or copied)

The Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky has long recognized the lack of research-based information for state education agency (SEA) monitoring personnel. This report summarizes the results of a national survey regarding the potential for a national organization to address their needs.

THE PROBLEM.

There is no consistent, legitimate forum for information on improving state practice on SEA monitoring of the policies and practices of local education agencies (LEAs) relative to educational services for students with disabilities and their families. As a result, the revisions that states make in their monitoring systems are frequently made on a basis other than research. Questions such as "Can peers be used effectively?," "What alternatives to withholding funds really lead to change?," and "How can technology most effectively support the process?" are frequently asked, yet few answers can be supported by data. Increasingly, conversations occur among monitors about "monitoring for quality" and "monitoring for results," with little agreement on what the terms mean or how to do it.

A major part of the problem is lack of a research base and a literature to document both theory and practice. There is no recognized discipline and no organization to which the SEA staff can belong that addresses these issues and that produces even a newsletter, much less a journal about effective monitoring processes. The American Evaluation Association (AEA) might come the closest to being such an organization, but it focuses on generic program evaluation issues. Only the involvement of a few state and federal auditors bring some monitoring issues to the fore in AEA (and no state monitors responding to this study belong to AEA).

Every other year or so, the Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) have collaborated to plan and conduct regional and national where state staff and U. S. Department of Education staff share ideas about how best to monitor. However, the RRCs will not always be able to support these conferences. Down sizing of SEAs, movement toward integrated monitoring and evaluation systems, constant change in the Federal government, staff burnout (travel fatigue) and the commensurate staff turnover all lead to states looking for better and more efficient ways to monitor. Evaluation data from prior RRC monitoring conferences and a recent survey of states about the 1997 conference agenda indicate that these people are anxious to learn from each other and might be ready to form a self-sustaining organization to do so.

POPULATION AND PROCEDURES

SEA monitoring contacts were identified by the RRC staff primarily responsible for addressing monitoring issues. Multiple copies of survey forms were sent to contact persons in 54 state agencies representing the continental U.S. and outlying areas. These individuals were asked to make share copies with other staff members who had monitoring responsibilities. After one month, a follow-up was sent to any state contact person from a state where no forms had been returned.

The timelines for the study were as follows:

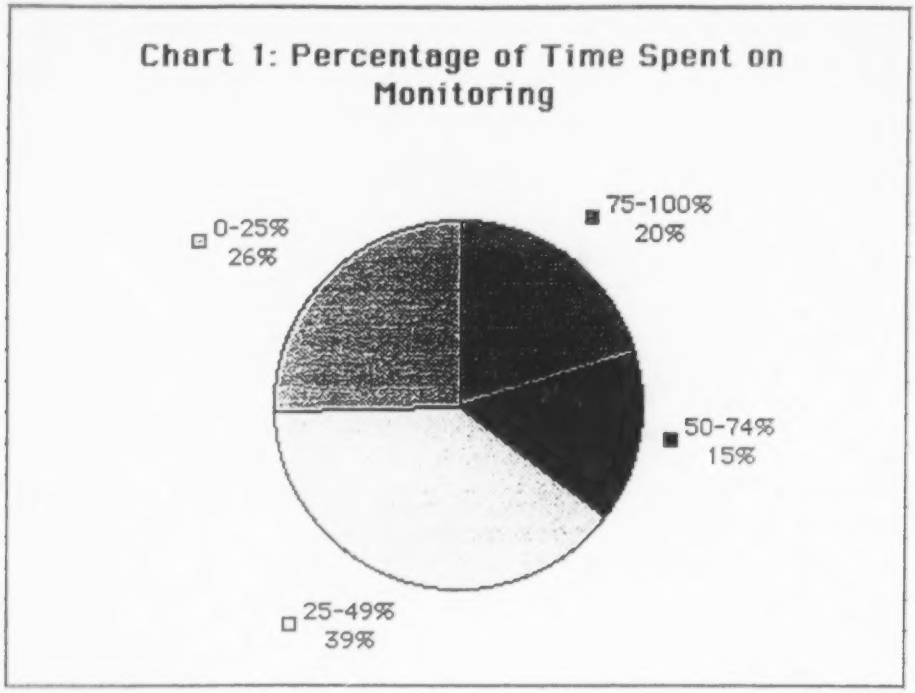
a. Approval of study by the HDI Research Committee - April , 1997
b. Collection of contact names in each state from each RRC - May 1-30, 1997
c. Draft form to RRCs for review, revisions made in form - June 3-7, 1997
d. Packages of forms prepared & sent to all states - June 20, 1997
d. Sent follow-up to states from which no forms were returned - July 25, 1997
e. Closed off incoming surveys as of August 19, 1997
f. Completed draft report - August 26, 1997.

One hundred fifty three useable survey forms were returned from 48 states. Individual states were represented as shown in Table 1:

Table 1
Respondents by State

State	Returns	State	Returns	State	Returns
AL	1	MA	1	RI	3
Am.Sam.	1	MD	2	SC	1
AR	9	ME	2	SD	2
AZ	7	MI	1	TN	5
CA	1	MN	5	TX	2
CO	1	MO	8	Unknown	1
CT	2	MS	6	UT	2
DC	5	MT	4	VA	2
DE	1	NC	3	VT	1
FL	2	ND	8	WA	1
GA	4	NE	2	WI	7
IA	2	NH	1	WV	3
ID	1	NM	1		
IL	6	NY	11		
IN	5	OH	4		
KS	2	OK	6		
KY	3	OR	1		
LA	2	PR	1		

Respondents were asked about the percentage of time they have allocated to monitoring. Chart 1 shows that approximately two-thirds of them spend less than half of their time on monitoring of LEAs.



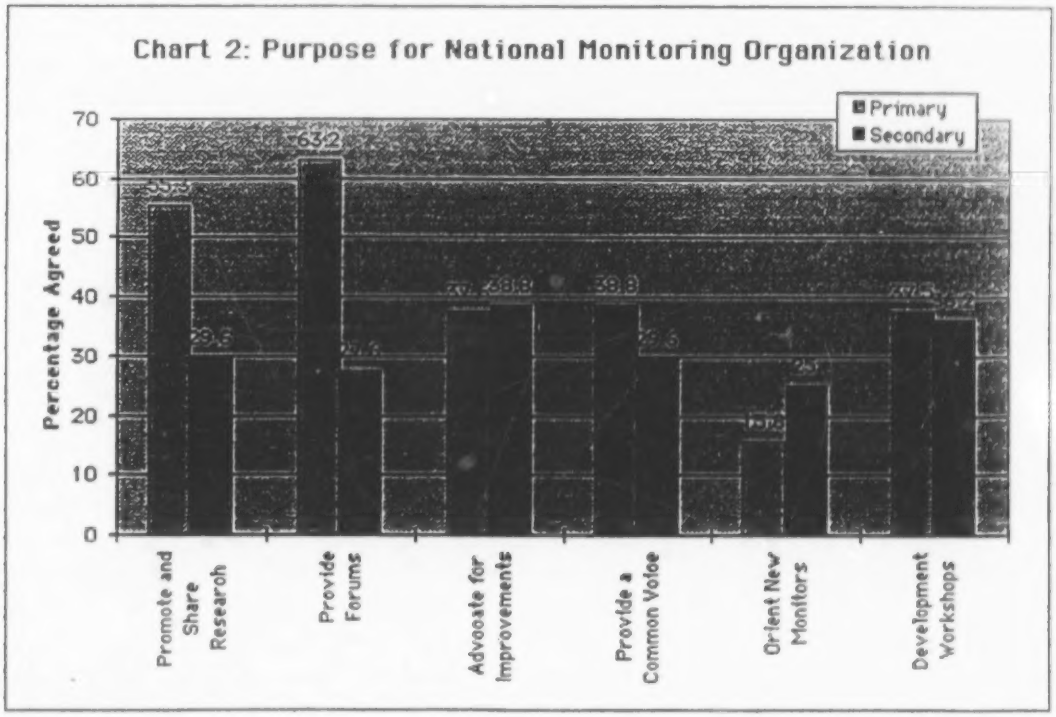
ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE

Respondents were asked to rate five purposes of a potential national professional organization of State Monitors in terms of whether each purpose should be primary, secondary, tertiary or not a purpose at all. The results displayed in Table 2 show that the promotion and sharing of research and providing forums for information exchange far outstripped the other purposes.

Chart 2 further demonstrates how the respondents rated the possible purposes. Apparently, an organization that would focus on advocacy and training would be of less interest to the respondents than one that had a research and sharing orientation. In fact, training and orientation of new monitors was considered least desirable as an organizational purpose.

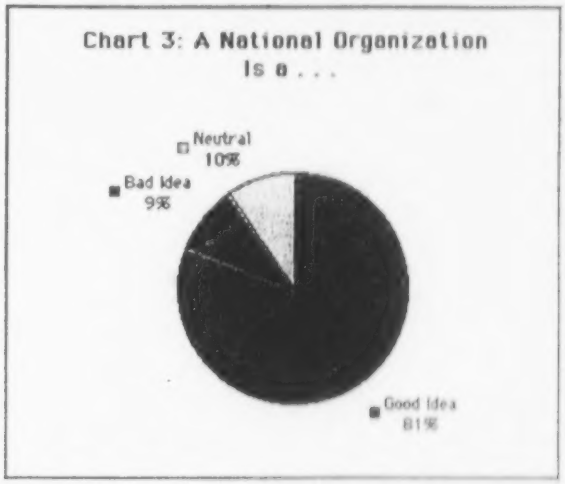
Table 2
Ratings of Potential Purposes for a National Monitoring Organization

Primary	Second-ary	Tertiary	Not a Purpose	Did Not Respd	
55.3	29.6	10.5	.7	3.9	a. Promote and share research on the practices and effects of SEA monitoring of local agencies.
63.2	27.6	5.9	.7	2.6	b. Provide forums for exchanges of ideas and experiences in SEA monitoring of LEAs.
37.6	38.8	16.4	3.9	3.3	c. Advocate for improvements the state-of-the-art of SEA monitoring of LEAs.
38.8	29.6	19.1	9.9	2.6	d. Provide a common voice, consistent for communication with the Federal government.
15.8	25.0	34.9	21.0	3.3	e. Provide opportunities to orient new monitors.
37.5	36.2	16.4	7.9	2.0	f. Provide staff development opportunities/workshops to improve skills of experienced monitors



ORGANIZATIONAL AUTONOMY

Respondents overwhelmingly felt that establishing a national organization is a good idea, with only 9% disagreeing (see Chart 3). However, when asked whether such an organization should be a stand-alone operation or an affiliate/sub-group of another organization, respondents were fairly equally split between the two (see Chart 4).



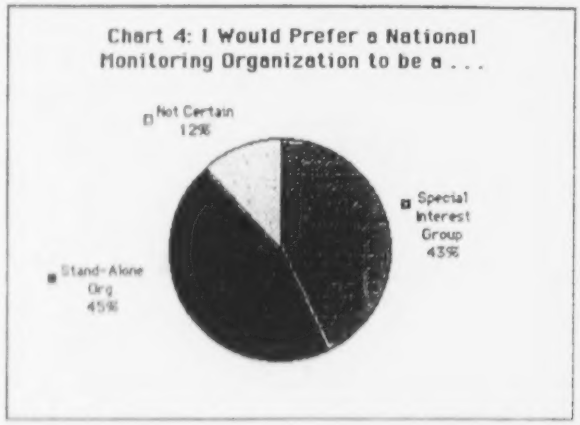


Chart 4: I Would Prefer a National Monitoring Organization to be a . . .
Not Certain 12%
Special Interest Group 43%
Stand-Alone Org 45%

Several of the respondents were content to let the RRCs continue to provide this as part of their work scope and a few suggested that a national organization was not needed because the RRC was already providing the support they needed on a regional basis. One of those who suggested a stand-alone organization, indicated that the choice was based on the fact that such a group did not seem to fit well with another larger entity.

If respondents had indicated an interest in affiliating with another group, it was important to know the other organizations to which they belonged. As Chart 5 shows, over 40% belong to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the next most frequent group membership is in the American Society for Curriculum and Development at only 13.7%. Other groups mentioned were usually disability-specific or were sub-groups of another organization (e.g., the Council of Administrators of Special Education, which is a sub-group of CEC).

However, it was interesting to this author that no respondent indicated membership in either the American Educational Research Association (AERA) or the American Evaluation Association (AEA). With over one hundred and fifty people responding to the survey who have significant portions of their time devoted to data collection, analysis and reporting, at least a few affiliations with one or both of these two organizations might have been expected.

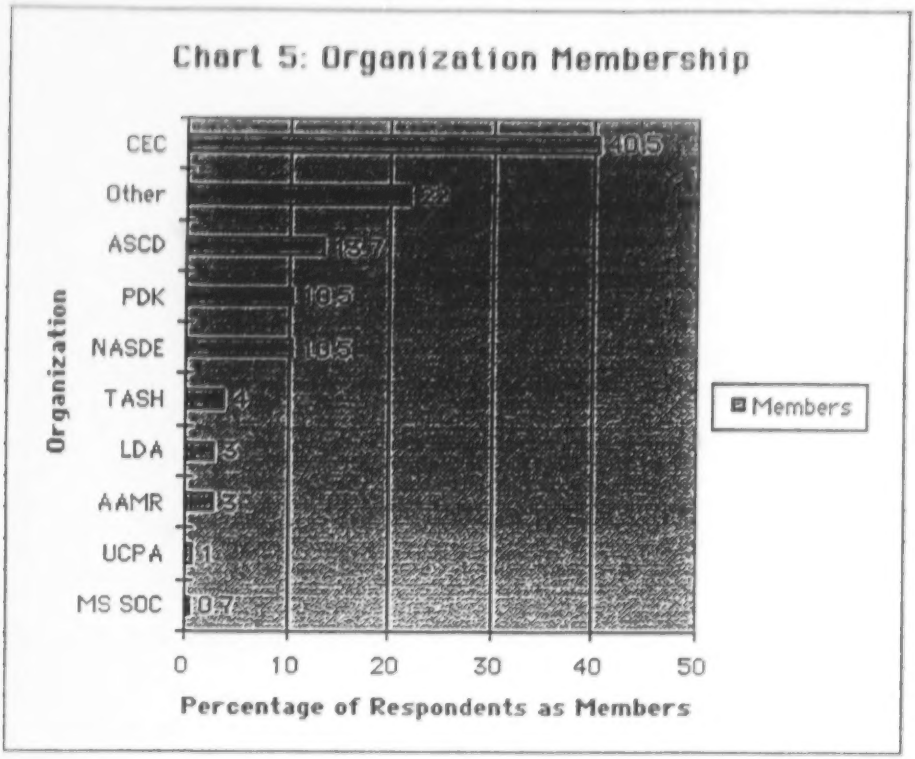


Chart 5a helps examine more closely the affiliations in relation to the question about whether the organization should stand alone or not. Members of CEC, NASDSE and PDK were most prone to suggest that the new organization affiliate with a larger organization.

SERVICES

Respondents were asked about the services a national organization should provide at no additional cost to members beyond membership fees. As shown in Chart 6, the most common services indicated were a listserv and web site (77%), an annual survey of state practices in monitoring with information posted to a web site and/or published in a summary of state practices (75%), a newsletter (72%) and a directory of members (70%). A substantial number (54%) also would like such an organization to provide a library of instruments, procedures and training materials for monitors (available at cost to members) and one respondent suggested that the organization serve as a "clearinghouse."

Those who indicated that a newsletter should be among the services were also asked about the frequency of such a communication vehicle. Of those who thought a newsletter should be produced, 67% suggested quarterly publication and 19% suggested twice a year was sufficient.

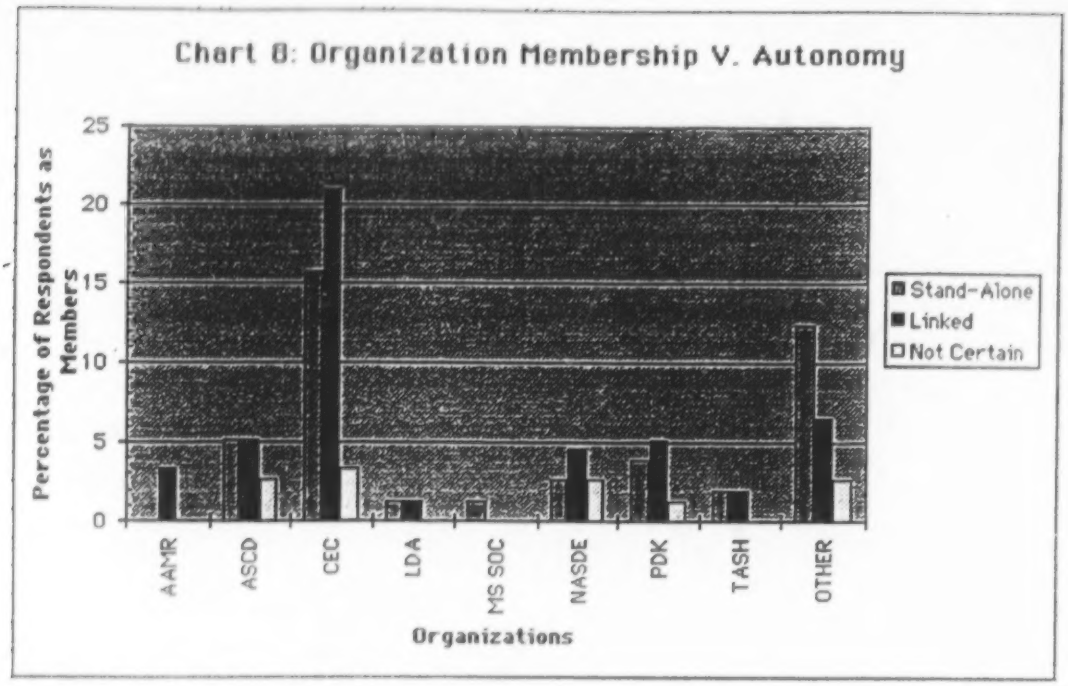


Chart 8: Organization Membership V. Autonomy
Percentage of Respondents as Members
25
20
15
10
5
0
AAMR
ASCD
CEC
LDA
MS SOC
NASDE
PDK
TASH
OTHER
Organizations
Stand-Alone
Linked
Not Certain

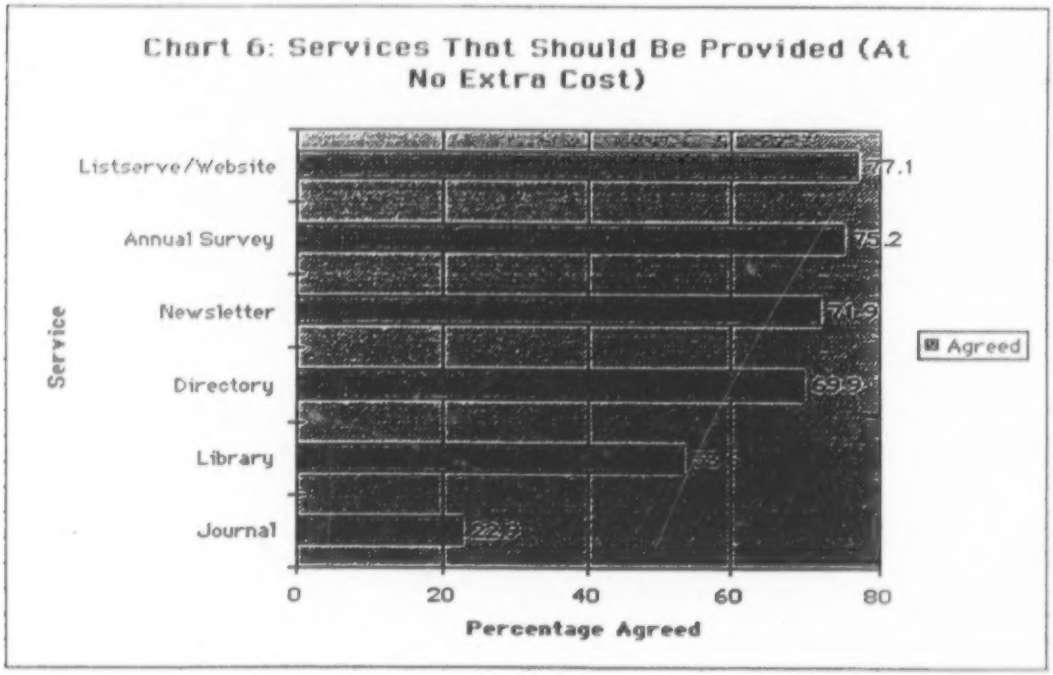
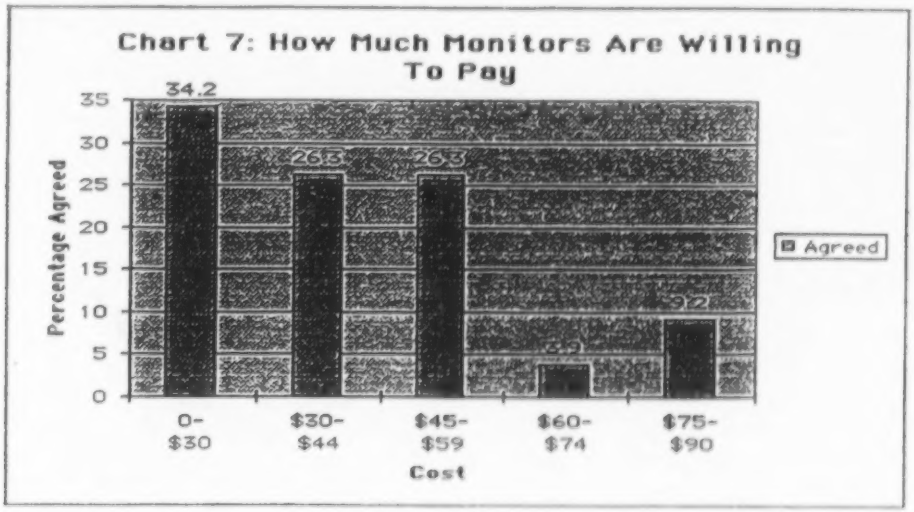


Chart 6: Services That Should Be Provided (At No Extra Cost)
Service
Listserve/Website
Annual Survey
Newsletter
Directory
Library
Journal
77.1
75.2
71.9
69.9
58
22.3
0
20
40
60
80
Percentage Agreed
Agreed

DUES

Finally, respondents were asked about the maximum they would be willing to pay for such services. Chart 7 shows that about two-thirds of the respondents would be willing to pay $30 or more per year to belong to such an organization. This distribution did not change substantially when the results on dues were reanalyzed for only those who indicated that it was a good idea to develop such an organization.



CONCLUSIONS

1. SEA monitors think that it would be helpful to have an organization that promotes and shares research and practices on SEA monitoring.

2. Perceptions are mixed about whether such an organization should be an affiliate (e.g., a special interest group) of a larger organization. Since there are so few persons in such monitoring roles and they are mostly part-time, perhaps affiliation with another group makes sense.

3. The primary services that such an organization might provide would be a listserv and web site, an annual survey of state practices in monitoring with information posted to a web site and/or published in a summary of state practices, a quarterly or biannual newsletter and a directory of member. In addition, an annual or semi-annual monitoring conference might be provided on a registration fee basis.

4. Annual dues in the range of $30-45 might be the upper limit. Since there is no dominant group to which all belong, affiliation with an organization with low general dues and no cost for topical interest groups such as AEA might be most feasible.

COMMENTS

Other Purposes:

- Share info on specific strategies and procedures that were/were not effective and why.
- Unlike CSPD monitoring does not have a common voice. Thus the purpose should be to unify information, share in public forums. Similar to what happens with the CSPD Annual Leadership Meeting.
- Sharing of information, promising practices, among states.
- What is the purpose for monitoring - compliance on improvement of services for students with disabilities.
- Coordinators often feel a lack of support and it would be helpful to know other states are busy doing what they are required to do.
- Communicate with admin. between state agencies, advocate to Feds., share and improve practices through a pool of "visiting" monitors to be pulled from.
- Alternate methods of monitoring.
- Provide training on changes with IDEA and its effects on monitoring practices. (Need this now!).
- To ensure disabled students receive FAPE.
- Collaboration/networking on strategies, reporting procedures, monitoring team dynamics, team composition, etc.
- What about collaboration with USDOE monitors to talk about national issues, trends, communicate priorities, etc. (maybe this falls under (d)).
- Clearinghouse for information.
- It would be helpful to have an organization for front line people responsible for directly monitoring LEAs.
- Examine relationship between SEA monitoring and student performance.
- These are great.

Comments on Purpose Ratings:

- These (purposes) are met through existing organizations: NASDE, WRRC, OSEP, DEH, OSEP, SEH,
- They are all essential for improving programs and services. Accountability need not stand alone or be seen as unimportant. It should be highlighted and best practices informing others should be shared.
- I rated it low because often when organizations are formed for a "common" voice, the voice of the "small" states become lost. It is important that individual differences are recognized and appreciated.

- Why/how monitor sets the stage for all other pursuits - so this should be paramount with the impact of monitoring secondary to this as we could research and demonstrate impact on a system predicated on poor or outdated thought.
- The research should be related to the effects of monitoring for improved results and should lead to dissemination of promising practices.
- It would be difficult to provide orientation and staff development since each state would have a different system for monitoring.
- Each element is important - it's critical not to forget why we're monitoring. An emphasis on students learning must be of highest priority.
- I tried to group States are so different that this fact must be taken into consideration.
- I think it would be beneficial to the monitoring team members to know what is working in other states, what might make it easier.
- Depends on your definition of state-of-the-art. I don't think we can monitor computers. Orientation at local (state) level - if they survive that, then go on to regional and national group gatherings.
- **Provide staff development opportunities/workshops to improve skills of experienced monitors** is a local responsibility.
- We have other forums for communication for Feds. Opportunities are there. Effects of monitoring--does monitoring impact the arena of student outcomes? Practices which effectively move us in the direction of Accountability?
- The closer to the field the better the technical assistance to ensure appropriate procedures and benefit to students. As a state, we <u>are</u> interested in other states' practices and findings. But, every state is unique, and we would do our own training vs. using (an organization).
- Work with the federal government needs support beyond a state effort. Most monitoring systems are state specific.
- **(d. Provide a common voice, consistent for communication with the Federal government.)** Not sure (d) is possible or desirable.
- Excellent idea.
- Regional would be more beneficial because states have more in common.
- Initial start-up would be forums/info sharing, etc. OSEP and States require similar monitoring.
- I attended a national monitoring conference 2 years ago and found the sharing of ideas most valuable. Communication and consistency of interpretations have presented problems in the past. Having a designated contact would help immensely. Ongoing staff development is essential as is keeping abreast of current research.
- We need a way to share ideas and make improvements in our own states.

- As a "rookie" I would still value orientation opportunities even a year into the job.
- Each state has their own style. I don't know how this could be done. Plus, it changes often and some states infuse this into other monitoring processes.
- I believe that the primary goals should be consensus across the State. The law is the law and we all need to be advocates for all Exceptional children who are all speaking with the same voice.
- Interesting idea. Not sure about implementation interest. So many other forums/organizations provide monitoring-related information. I'd rather see an Internet resource.
- My reason for not rating (d) & (e) as high is I feel this would be extremely difficult and perhaps unproductive due to the great inconsistency among states in how they conduct monitoring. I felt that (b) would be the avenue for doing (f).
- Each state is so different in terms of size, relationship with LEAs, legislature, etc. The primary purpose of such an organization should be common to all States and territories.
- Based on experience and the need for supported methods, from State and Federal Organizations.
- New monitor orientation needs to initially be specific to each state; experience people need improved skills and are better able to look at improving "the process" while new staff are still learning the process itself.
- (d) The Commissioner of Education only speaks for this agency to the federal government.
- It would be very important to see how other professionals deal with the same circumstances.
- I have questioned frequently if what we are doing really provides the information we need.
- State monitoring processes are too diverse to provide training of substance at the national level.
- With each State implementing LEA monitoring in a unique way, providing a common voice would be very difficult.
- (d) We have other forums for communication with Feds. (e) Opportunities are there if a, b, c, were to happen. (f) same as (e). A = effects of monitoring...Does monitoring impact the arena of student outcomes?..Practices which effectively move in the direction of Accountability?
- My interest is in the "How do you do it?" aspect of actual monitoring I need info I can take and use, not theories or should be's.

Other Organizations:

- While not a member, NASDSE shares information with me as State Coordinator of CSPD
- ASHA, CLSHCSEA
- Several nutrition related organizations
- American Counseling Association (ACA), American School Counseling Association (ASCA).
- CASE, Phi Kappa Phi.
- MO CASE
- AER
- ADI
- NASP, WSPA, ASA
- NSDC (National Staff Development Council)
- Am. Correctional Assoc.
- RESNA
- NDEA
- ASHA, MSHA, have been CASE member
- Applied with CEC
- Applied w/CEC
- CCRD
- AAHPERD
- Phi Delta Kappa
- APA, NASP
- WRA, CRC, KASPA
- ASCD, CASE, PIONE, DEC
- APA
- School Psychology-State level
- NAEYC
- NAEYC, NAD
- IRA, NCTE
- Council for Learning Disabilities
- AHPERD
- DEC, NAEYC
- ASHA
- Ark. Assoc. of Sp. Ed. Administrators

Other Comments/Suggestions:

- Annual conferences that highlight practices in other states, and response to the challenges of educating tomorrow's children with disabilities.
- **If a national organization was formed, I would prefer this organization would be a stand-alone organization** with collaboration, e.g., meetings, position statements with other organizations.
- I think Kansas probably does not share in the (need) so much because about 1 yr. ago 4 states started meeting informally twice a year. (Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska). We are going to maybe expand to 5 or 6 states if possible. The sharing/information exchange has been very beneficial. Also MPRRC has sponsored phone calls with the SEA monitors. I see a problem with being a part of a larger group (CASE & CEC) in that it is not always possible for all to get away if we were to try to get together as a part of another group. Other desired services would be the face-to-face meeting time to exchange ideas and network once in a while.
- If I am interested (truly interested) I would pay equivalent to the benefits for me.... I feel an exchange of ideas for sharing practices is a good idea. I am not sure a new organization is necessary. Could an existing format/organization be utilized?
- **For the above services, the <u>most</u> I** how much/office? I would not join, except to share with our entire office.
- **I think a National Organization:** Not sure - Do we need <u>1</u> more organization?
- **Provide a common voice, consistent for communication with the Federal government.** I don't know if this is possible with each SEA having its own process/system.
- To attach it to CEC makes it too expensive - CEC dollars plus the ancillary group.
- **Provide forums for exchanges of ideas and experiences in SEA monitoring of LEAs** Regional sharing more beneficial.
- **Provide opportunities to orient new monitors** State and Regional training.
- **I think a National Organization:** Not on a yearly basis - perhaps every 2-3 years.
- Ken, I'll be the new compliance director as of July. Judy has passed on the info about Salt Lake. - Harry Repsher.
- **Be a stand-alone organization** Only because I don't see this fitting well with larger entities that I know of.
- **For the above services** - Regional Resource Centers could provide this as part of their services?

- *Note - I will not be a monitor, effective 7/1/97 - transferring positions - Ann Sanders, TN State Dept.
- Our RRC has been very helpful to us.
- Thanks for doing this. I am still very interested in this organization and the Institute. I am digging my way out of all the reports this year and being understaffed. July 1 will have another coordinator on board so that I can put my efforts into this effort. Please stay in touch and let me know how I can help.
- What about job information and interaction without Sp. Ed. training program on sp. ed. law which should be part of Higher Ed training of teachers.
- Great idea. Look forward to information on the results in Salt Lake. Thanks.
- **I think a National Organization:** There are so many that one should belong to now to be aware of what's going on.
- Need to explore ways to share information without travel. Our agency allows very limited out-of-state travel.
- **National Organization:** I am neutral – what would the benefits be? I feel there would be over. I don't believe we need a <u>new</u> organization. **For the above services** - If I'm interested (truly interested) I would pay equivalent to the benefits for me...
- I feel an exchange of ideas for sharing practices is a good idea. I am not sure a new organization is in the best interest.
- My needs for "organization" are met at the current time by the current WRRC network of monitors in my region, in addition to the occasional national conference and monitoring - related strands at NASDSE, OSEP spring leadership, regional meetings, etc.
- **I think a National Organization is a good idea** - If it were available to state agencies for their employees who monitor. I don't know if I would personally join, as I already belong to several organizations.
- Again, I believe this should be available to state agencies who could choose who would participate.
- The only involvement I currently have as part of my job is to train monitors. I no longer monitor.
- **A listserve and web site -** Absolutely top priority.

Appendix F: 1997 National Monitoring Conference Agenda

National Monitoring Conference

Wyndham Hotel
Salt Lake City, Utah

September 4 - 5 , 1997

A • G • E • N • D • A

Thursday, September 4, 1997
Wasatch Ballrooms 1 and 2

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	**Greetings and Welcome** *Steve Kukic* *John Copenhaver* Review Conference Focus ***SEA Monitoring of Local Districts*** Agenda Review
9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	**Integrated Monitoring of LEAs** *Nancy Gray, Cherie Nicholson and Carol Dermyer* *Kansas State Department of Education* *Forrest Novy and Deborah Nance* *Texas Education Agency* *Ted Hawthorne and Catherine Conrado* *California Department of Education*
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Networking
11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	**Open Discussion with SEA Staff Panel**
11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	**Regional Lunches** Northeast RRC — Cottonwood 2 Room Mid-South RRC — Parleys 1 Room South Atlantic RRC — Parleys 2 Room Great Lakes RRC — Emigration Room Mountain Plains RRC — Red Butte Room Western RRC — Cottonwood 1 Room
	** *Return to Wasatch Ballrooms 1 and 2* **
1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	**Self Assessment and Monitoring** *Pete Hoechner, Linda Atwood and Chris Thacker* *Kentucky Department of Education* *Sandra Ruffin and James Brashears* *Virginia Department of Education*

2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	**Small Group Table Discussions on Self-Assessment and Monitoring**
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	**Networking**
3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	**Large Group Conversation with Panel Participants**
4:30 p.m.	**Adjourn**

Friday, September 5, 1997
Wasatch Ballrooms 1 and 2

7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.	**Continental Breakfast**
8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	**Preview of Agenda**
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	**SEA Presentation** *Rebecca Cort and Dan Johnson* *New York State Education Department*
9:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	**Small Group Sessions**

Use of Standards in Monitoring for Results — Red Butte Room
Forrest Novey and Deborah Nance
Texas Education Agency

SEA Accountability for Results — Parleys 1 Room
Kay Johnston
West Virginia Department of Education

Contracted Monitoring — Cottonwood 1 Room
Margaret Lubke and Emily Johnson
Utah State Office of Education (TRL Monitoring)

Data Management — Parleys 2 Room
Pete Hoechner, Linda Atwood and Chris Thacker
Kentucky Department of Education

Tying Monitoring to Practice — Cottonwood 2 Room
Anne DeFanti, Thomas DiPaola and Janice Stavros
Rhode Island Department of Education

Cathy Bishop
Florida Department of Education

10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	**Break**
	** *Return to Wasatch Ballrooms 1 and 2* **
11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	**Reports from Small Groups**
11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**Lunch On Your Own**
1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	**OSEP Update on the Implementation of the IDEA Amendments of 1997** *OSEP Staff*
2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	**Networking**
2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	**SEA Proposals for Technical Assistance**
3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	**Evaluation and Closing**